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REMINISCENCES OF A NAVAL SURGEON

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REMINISCENCES
OF A
NAVAL SURGEON

BY
SURGEON REAR-ADMIRAL
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"ON FOREIGN SERVICE," "JOHN GRAHAM, SUB-LIEUT.,"
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"NAVAL BRIGADES IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR."

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INTRODUCTION

THE keeping of diaries is no reason—and no excuse—for publishing their siftings; but, having kept them throughout the thirty-two years which I have spent in the Royal Naval Medical Service, the stringing together of these reminiscences has given me some months of pleasant occupation.

I can think of no better advice to give a youngster in the Navy than to urge him to keep a journal, regularly. The more trivial the incidents recorded often the more interesting the recollections they evoke in after years; and the five or six minutes so spent, each day, throughout a Service career, can hardly, I imagine, be spent more profitably.

When at last he has to pack away his uniform, for ever, he can, at least, live more vividly in the past.

I have to thank former messmates for allowing me to use their photographs.

T. T. JEANS,

Surgeon Rear-Admiral.

Venice,
July, 1927.

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ERRATA.

Page 56, 7th line from bottom, " four-inch " read " four eight-inch."
Page 94, 18th line from top, " commandor " read " commando."
Page 220, 9th line from top, " guage " read " gage."
Page 230, 18th line from top, " at any rate; " read " ; at any rate."
Page 241, 6th line from bottom, " hundred " read " thousand."
Page 243, 7th line from top, " sheltered " read " shelter."
Page 252, 10th line from top. " 26th April " read " 25th April."
Facing page 264. Illustration, " 25th April, 1914 " read " 25th April, 1915."
Index. " Henry of Russia " read " Henry of Prussia."
Index. " Munro " read " Monro."

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REMINISCENCES OF A NAVAL SURGEON

CHAPTER I

1894-5

Haslar Hospital—H.M.S. " Vernon "—H.M.S. " Raven "—Channel Islands—Fishery Protection Duties—The Carpenter and the Grindstone—The Missing Haystack—Obsolete Gunnery.

On one bright May morning of 1894, just before nine o'clock, twenty " Young Doctors " gathered under the gloomy, vault-like entrance of the Royal Naval Hospital, at Haslar, outside the office of the Inspector-General, and awaited the coming of that officer to inspect them.

I was one of those twenty.

We had arrived fresh from the competitive examination in London, most of us, to tell the truth, only mildly enthusiastic at the prospect of our new career. As a " batch "—the rather undignified name given to newly-caught surgeons—we averaged nearly twenty-six years of age—an unusually old age. Most of us had been trained in London Schools, and though Cambridge and Provincial Universities were well represented, Scotland and Ireland only contributed five to our number—an unusually small proportion.

We felt uncomfortable and self-conscious in our unaccustomed uniform; each wondered if his new frock-coat fitted as badly as those of the others; and unless we clutched tightly at our dangling swords, the wretched things *would* get between our legs.

And our white gloves; we seemed *all* white kid gloves; we hadn't a notion what to do with them, to put them on, or carry them gracefully in our sword hand.

What with dropping them and tripping over our swords, as we picked them up again, we felt as uncomfortable as, no doubt, we looked.

Outside the entrance, through the archway, the sun shone brightly on the green lawns and the ancient red-bricked walls of the hospital: the sun never entered where we stood. The flagged pavement, worn by time and the coming and going of countless feet, was still damp from the early morning "scrub decks", and the heavy atmosphere reeked hatefully of iodoform.

An archaic tram-ambulance, standing on the rails leading down to Haslar creek, half blocked the entrance, with piles of dirty hammocks and seamen's bags heaped alongside it, while on the far side, begrimed, prison-like windows only added to the prevailing gloom. "Abandon Hope All Ye Who Enter Here" was not inscribed over this entrance—as the Service jest has it—but that was the feeling engendered that day and never successfully have I, myself, shaken off that first impression.

Presently, Dr. Hilston, the white-haired, sad-eyed Inspector-General, came out of his office, spoke a few "kind" words of welcome to the Royal Navy, and dismissed us to the tender mercies of the "Surgeon for Instruction of Surgeons on Entry".

This officer, whom we will call Hamilton, was known as "Floating Bridge" Hamilton, and had earned that soubriquet when himself a "Surgeon on Entry". In his time, several contemporaries had been appointed to ships for manœuvres; he, though wild to go to sea, had not. One morning, to his great joy, a telegram arrived ordering him to "Join forthwith Floating Bridge lent for Manœuvres!" Great excitement!—packing of tin-cases!—fetching of cab!—and within an hour, in frock-coat and sword with his tin-cases on the box before him, he rumbled down to Gosport to report himself to the Skipper of that quaint old craft that groaned and rattled, backwards and forwards on its rusty chains, year in and year out, across the mouth of Portsmouth Harbour.

History does not relate whether he did actually report himself, on board, or whether his messmates cancelled the appointment before he reached her: but the yarn and the nick-name stuck to him ever after.

On this officer now devolved the duty of teaching us the "ropes". No longer could we go out of Hospital—only "ashore"; ships were ships, whatever their size, and not "boats"; and spasms of pain contorted his chiselled features as he described the awful cliché of using the word "on", instead of "in", our future floating homes. "Leave" had to be, must be, pronounced "leef", with the "f" bitten off sharply, and as to saluting and returning salutes, the recognition of rank and the progressive deference to be paid, as more and more senior officers should presently flit across our paths, he was indeed wonderful.

He even went farther to help us along the thorny path befronting us. Where or how he thought we had been "raised", Heaven only knows, but he gave us guidance in the elementary usages of "society", and would have dilated more fully on that interesting topic had our, as yet, primitive ideas of discipline not given way at the humour of it. Long years ago that happened, but I well remember the howl of derision on his explaining to us that when we called on the wives of the Resident

Officers, we must remember, always remember, "to wipe our boots on the front door mat!"

A very genial idiot had but lately left Haslar. During his stay there, the Senior Fleet-Surgeon—a very dignified, courteous doctor of considerable private means—invited him to a tennis party. His messmates, congratulated him, but were careful to explain that though, of course, it was very jolly of the old chap to ask him—and "all that", still, of course, everyone knew how hard up he was, and that he expected a half-crown from each of his guests, at the end of the party.

So the Genial Idiot fumbled in his trouser pocket, as he said good-bye, and instead of grasping the outstretched hand of his host, pressed the half-crown into it, mumbling in a half-whisper, "I believe it is customary, sir".

It is recorded that not even then did the Fleet-Surgeon's dignity desert him as he returned the coin, remarking that "perhaps his guest had been 'misinformed'".

In our year of grace, the Regulations required all officers, present, to return a salute, and our, then, nervous anxiety to conform, imposed a heavy strain on us, more especially as many of the younger members of the Sick Berth Staff took a holy delight in saluting us while we walked, in groups, about the Hospital, dashing ahead, round a corner, and saluting us, again, for the pure and hallowed joy of exercising us in this accomplishment.

Each in his turn, we Young Doctors, while at Haslar, had to rise with the lark to record and reset the ancient meteorological instruments in the hospital grounds. I suppose that the performance of an irritating and entirely useless duty inculcates discipline, and that the more irritating and useless, the better the effect ought to be. If so, we should have benefited our souls hugely. I do know that a damned jackdaw always attended me on my errand of mercy, and as fast as I replaced yesterday's smoked-paper recording strips with new ones, he removed them, with the result that our Floating Bridge Hero, who often followed us to see that we did not neglect our childish task, had grave doubts as to my fitness for Her Majesty's Service.

For us, in those days, there was no luxurious mess, as there is now. We lived in a converted wing of the old building, and slept in another distant ward, partitioned into cubicles. In 1894 naval hospitals lagged sadly behind civil hospitals, in very many essentials, and specialist work was scarcely dreamed of. To-day, naval hospitals are not only as well, or often better, equipped, than civil hospitals, but they are staffed by sea doctors who have learned—in spite of all the obstacles inherent in a sea service—to be extraordinarily efficient.

In those days, young doctors flocked into the Service—there were fifty-four candidates for commissions when my " batch " entered—yet for some years before and after the Great War, the Navy has clamoured for them and wept tears of joy whenever one delivered himself up.

Surgery, in the Navy, then, was somewhat primitive, and an operation which would be termed a " major " one, to-day, a rarity; so we saw little of the theatre, and these three months at Haslar would have been wasted but for our inspections of different types of ships, lying in the Dockyard; and if we had not hired two large sailing boats and, under the instruction of one of our number—Jameson—learned to sail them. And to sail in and out of Portsmouth Harbour, at all states of the tide and breeze, requires no small amount of skill.

As the youngest and much the smallest of the merry crew, it fell to my lot, on Sunday afternoons, to steer our big " Una "-rigged boat up and down the Solent, while my elder and more "hefty" companions slept off the effects of a hearty lunch—the huge, masterful Shirley Birt; Heather, the disillusioned; John Pead and Barter, cricketers and tolerant cynics; Kilroy, the cheerful; and our sailing master, Jameson, who always slept with one eye open in case I should get into trouble. The knowledge thus acquired was the most valuable that any of us gained during those three months.

From Haslar, we " Young Doctors " were let loose to work our wicked will in ships and shore establishments. I was appointed to the Torpedo School ship *Vernon.* This establishment comprised the old, wooden, three-decker line-of-battleship, of that name, and the *Ariadne*, the last, or one of the last, of the wooden steam-frigates to be built. Connected by a covered gangway from the frigate's stern to the *Vernon's* bow, these two ships were moored off the *Duke of Wellington* Steps, in Portsmouth Harbour, abreast the hulks which bore that name and formed the Naval Depôt. The present Naval Barracks did not exist.

At this time a very brilliant group of officers belonged to the *Vernon* experimental staff—Jackson, soon to revolutionise sea communications with his wireless experiments; Madden, the tireless mining expert; Bacon, the torpedo expert and mathematician; de Chair, torpedo man and born diplomatist, and several others. To me, fresh from the "shore ", enthusiastic about everything connected with the sea, crammed full of every detail to be learned from Brassey's *Naval Annual*, year after year, while I had worked for my degree, the six months spent in H.M.S. *Vernon* passed all too quickly, and I owe a debt of gratitude to my messmates, in this my first ship, for their kindness to a newly-caught Surgeon, whose inquisitiveness for knowledge could only be excused by his eagerness to acquire it.

My duties, in addition to purely medical work, included attendance in torpedo boats running torpedoes off Lee-on-Solent, going away with "instructional parties" on board the old hulk *Actæon*—in fact, anywhere where an accident might happen, especially among the many light-hearted, young sub-lieutenants and lieutenants, under training, whose handling of gun-cotton charges and other explosives often left much to be desired.

We lived in the *Ariadne*, a beautifully modelled ship, obsolete long before she had been launched, although I believe that she had made sixteen knots, on one of her steam trials, flying very light with half a gale behind her. My tiny cabin, on the orlop deck, had a port-hole scuttle at the end of a sloping pipe through her thick wooden side, and it could only be opened or closed by means of a long prong-shaped bar. It rose but a few inches above the sea level, so even the splashes from the wash of a passing steamboat found their way into my bunk, and it had, therefore, to be kept closed, almost always, and while closed, the only change of air—one could not call it ventilation—came from the musty hold-spaces below. In the daytime, the light coming down this pipe was just sufficient to read a newspaper; after dark, even in this Torpedo School, with all its germinating electrical devices, a single candle, swinging in its navy-pattern brass holder, gave the only source of light, and that so dimmed by a thick opaque shade, that reading by it was out of the question. However, it was my first cabin and I did not despise it.

One thing struck me almost immediately—that torpedo officers and their chums, across the way, at

Whale Island, looked on progress in their own particular realms, from an entirely different point of view. The torpedo officer seemed only too anxious to utilise any mechanical, scientific, or metallurgical advance which would help to make his erratic torpedo into a weapon of precision—a torpedo which would keep its depth, run fast, and—above all—run straight; the gunnery officer seemed to acquiesce grudgingly in improvements in ordnance design. In fact, the one School always tried to take the initiative and the other to resist it.

The differing mental outlook is, of course, easily explainable. The Torpedo School had no traditions to oppose progress; their new weapon was pregnant with tremendous and far-reaching possibilities; and they had only the ridiculous outrigger-torpedo to discard. The Gunnery School was immeshed in tradition; a new gun rendered obsolete the existing ordnance of the whole fleet, existing armour and existing design of ships (which they had almost alone controlled hitherto). Their point of view nevertheless hindered progress.

Facetious torpedo officers would indignantly refute such gross insinuation and misrepresentation by pointing to the new pattern seamen's gaiter, lately evolved by the Gunnery School.

My pleasant months in the *Vernon* came to an end and I found myself appointed surgeon of the *Raven*, a tiny composite gunboat, obsolete as the "Ark", employed on fishery duties in the Channel Islands. What a funny little craft she was, tied up to the sea wall of Gorey Harbour, in Jersey, under the shadow of the old castle of Mount Orgueil, with its Admiralty War Signal Station almost looking into Cherbourg Harbour—a relic of the Napoleonic wars. Her White Ensign was almost as big as herself, her perky yellow funnel was not much bigger than a stove pipe, and a bronzed 64-pounder rifled Armstrong muzzle-loader, amidships, occupied most of her upper-deck space. She had made herself a beautiful resting place in the odoriferous mud, and sat in it, peacefully, twelve hours a day or more, when the forty-foot tides ebbed away from her—half a mile away from her, sometimes. After having lived for six months among thirty or forty messmates, bubbling over with new ideas, and even heard radical political doctrines debated in a naval mess without rancour—at any rate, not excessive rancour—I now came to live in a ward-room where the fat, jovial, little Paymaster (Alton), and myself, lived practically alone. Two warrant officers kept " day on " and " day off " as " Commanding Officer ", and the Skipper, First Lieutenant and Engineer only spent the forenoons on board to relieve the tedium of life ashore—except, of course, when the great warship puffed majestically out to sea to try and catch some French fishing lugger reported as loitering, suspiciously, near the shores of Alderney. The *Raven* could not exceed eight knots, and seldom steamed more than seven, so she had little chance of overhauling a Frenchman except in a dead calm. We also had strong suspicions that whenever we moved out of harbour, the Alderney folk got wind of it and warned the Frenchmen—often their best customers—to sheer off. At any rate, in secrecy of departure lay our best chance of success; so we generally slipped away after dark.

A night at sea meant five officers to dinner in the tiny ward-room, so we always ordered a beefsteak and oyster pudding from the little hotel in the village. If the sailing orders came—as they generally did—from the Skipper's house, the other side of the Bay, his coxswain, who brought them, had to call at the hotel, on the way round, to order the pudding to be made; but having given the order would, more often than not, succumb to the blandishments of the bar and forget altogether about the ship. Meanwhile, we, on board the *Raven*, would know nothing about the coming enterprise until the little maid-of-all-work, from the hotel, would appear, late in the afternoon, at the shore end of the gangway, holding up the steaming pudding in her apron.

Down would dash the quartermaster to report, "the pudden" as come alongside, sir", and then would commence a general "rush round"—telegrams to recall the First Lieutenant (Darby Kelly), and the Engineer (Roy)—a couple of hands to fetch the coxswain from the hotel and messengers round the village to gather the "liberty men".

Presently, down would come the Skipper; Roy and Kelly would report "steam on the engines" and "ready for sea"; the half-sobered coxswain would help him into his uniform, and off the little *Raven* would push into the night.

The village "crier"—if there had been one—could not have advertised, more effectively, her *secret* departure than that little maid bearing the pudding along the sea wall.

We never did catch a French fishing boat red-handed.

After one such night we arrived, at dawn, off the mouth of a narrow bay, in Alderney, where the suspected craft had been reported busy lifting lobster pots, and Kelly, with a boat's crew, pulled it up to investigate. As usual the bird had flown, but Kelly did not return empty-handed, for on the half-deck, outside the pantry and the warrant officers' cabins, sprawled three splendid lobsters. In spite of our congratulations, Kelly, himself, did not seem particularly enthusiastic, and at last confessed that he had lifted some lobster pots, "just to see, you fellows, if the Frenchman *had* emptied them—and—well, he *hadn't*, and a damned old hag, on shore, poked her head out from behind a rock and shook her fist at me!"

That meant trouble and brought it, right enough, for no sooner had we anchored between the old forts of Braye Harbour than out came the same old lady, in a boat, and—as far as I remember—those lobsters cost us some fifteen shillings each—about six times their value, but cheap at the price if it kept the old damsel's mouth shut—which it probably did not.

On one memorable occasion, however, our devotion to duty and our sleuth-hound strategy met with success—modified success. At low spring tides the Écrehos Reefs, between Jersey and France, expose a great expanse of rocks, and from the pools, in between, Frenchmen often took the opportunity of hauling the finest lobsters anywhere to be found. With extra secrecy—the little hotel maid covered the pudding entirely with her apron—we dashed off at dead of night, swooped down to wind'ard of the reef, at break of dawn, and sure enough, there was a mast sticking up on the other side and the signalman swore that he could see people scrambling about the pools. Great excitement! Kelly, ordered to avoid bloodshed, if possible, dashed off in the whaler, with an armed crew, and the *Raven* crawled at her best speed round to leeward to cut off the miscreants' escape, expecting every minute to see a great lug sail hoisted on that mast and, once more, to be too late.

But for once we were *not* too late, and had "captured" the Governor of Jersey, his yacht, the Attorney-General, the Attorney-General's wife, and many others! We who had wondered what England would say when she heard of our desperate venture had to be content that the Governor would, at any rate, realise that the *Raven* did sometimes go to sea!

To soften our disappointment, Kelly brought off an old Frenchman whom he had found catching lobsters and, with modified pride, we took him and his miserable "dug out" to Gorey and tried to hand him over to the police. But they would have nothing to do with him, although he had the reputation of being the local "star turn" brandy-smuggler. In fact, we did not know what the devil to do with our pirate; the local civil and military authorities did not know, either; perhaps even the Foreign Office began to send indignant telegrams to Paris; but while all the fuss went on, the old gentleman began to feel hungry, let himself down over the side, on to the mud, and walked away, much to everyone's relief.

The *Raven* claimed that in her originated the hoary old joke—"Grindstones, one in number, destroyed by rats."

The warrant officers had a storehouse at the sea end of the wall, and, in the bad old days, it had been the cheerful custom of their predecessors to fill up with stores, at Portsmouth, every six months, and dispose of them, ashore, when the *Raven* returned to Gorey. This store generally contained more rats than stores, but when the disappearance of this legendary grindstone appeared as debited, in their accounts, to these voracious rodents, even the Accountant Admiralty officials did not like it, consulted eminent rat specialists, and dire results followed.

That reminds me of the story of the carpenter of a gunboat on the East Coast of Africa, many years ago. What with the climate, the food, the plague of cockroaches and the tantalising lack of slave dhows, life had become a hideous monotony, and his store accounts had drifted into a hopeless muddle. Neither he nor his messmates could make head or tail of them, so, in desperation, he tore them into very small pieces, poured the pieces into a wooden box, added a handful of thriving cockroaches, nailed down the box and forwarded it to the Admiralty. Months afterwards he received the official receipt for the accounts, and a request that the duplicate accounts should be forwarded into office " as the Admiralty copy appeared to have been somewhat mutilated in transit." As a matter of fact, all that the box contained, when opened, were two gaunt cockroaches eyeing each other hungrily, and the débris of thousands of indigestible cockroach legs and wing-cases.

The wily carpenter " regretted that he could not comply with this order because his own spare copy had, in the meantime, been destroyed by cockroaches" !—and there the matter ended.

I cannot imagine the junior of our two warrant officers, in the *Raven*, disposing of a fathom of cod-line illegally. He suffered from the observance of a most meticulous and sometimes unnecessary accuracy—no half-truths existed for him; he would have left George Washington at the post. On one occasion the Paymaster and myself asked him and his wife to have tea with us, in the ward-room. She happened to be wearing a new hat, and as everyone in the *Raven* took a family interest in everyone else, we naturally discussed it and compared it with others which we knew. One of us turned to her husband and innocently asked, "Surely you like her best in that? Mr. ——"

The Incorruptible hesitated for one brief moment, and then blurted out, "I likes her best in her 'shimmy'"—and, as far as I remember, the lady, herself, showed no sign of displeasure.

The Skipper, Commander Somerset, was a huge man, as kind-hearted as he was burly, and had lately come from the boys' training ship, at Portsmouth, where he had been in his element. His ideas of uniform—for himself, at any rate—did not find their counterpart in the Queen's Regulations. Once, after he had come aboard and been " dressed " by his coxswain, he pounced on a seaman whose " A " in the *Raven* did not exactly plumb his nose. Kelly was sent for, the Bos'n was sent for, the miserable sinner was thundered at, and down to the ward-room came the Skipper to calm his ruffled feelings with his usual pint of stout. One glance in the side-board mirror and his anger burst forth, again, for he had a straw hat on his head, he had forgotten to change his red tie, he had a pair of shore-going serge trousers on his legs, and, looking down, he saw a pair of tanned, canvas shoes protruding hideously beneath them!

Kelly had to bear the blame, Roy, Alton and myself: we were utterly untrustworthy, a combined disgrace to the Service. How we could let him go up on deck looking like a —— Christy Minstrel and slang a poor devil for having a cap ribbon out of line—it was appalling!

The little *Raven* was actually a standing joke in the Channel Islands, and her gunnery a screaming farce. Her big gun could not hit a haystack at five hundred yards, and as for the two little twenty-pounder breech-loading, screw and wedge guns, on slide-mountings on the poop, they were more dangerous to those who fired them than they could ever hope to be to any of the Queen's enemies. But for all that the Gunnery Returns had to be forwarded, and forwarded smartly, too, to the bureaucrats at Whale Island.

On one occasion, at least, after a night at sea, Kelly, at breakfast, sang out, " Hope we didn't disturb you, you chaps; we did our quarterly-firing during the night", which conveyed to us the joyful information that we should be spared the usual fuss and breaking of glass, and gently intimated that the quarterly allowance of ammunition had been dropped over the side. Between us, during the ensuing forenoon, we would solemnly "fake" the Returns, but had to be careful not to be too optimistic, lest the Whale Island experts, glowing with joy at our marvellous results, would consider the advisability of advocating a return to muzzle-loading guns throughout the Navy—or, possibly, become faintly suspicious.

Kelly had a grudge against a local farmer, who had a fine haystack on the top of the rocky cliffs above Gorey. When in line with the church spire, this formed a leading mark to avoid a shoal patch on entering the harbour; it had stood there for more than a year and as it was perched up so high, it could be "picked up" above the usual low-lying fog belt which so often obscured lower marks. It had really become an old and trusted friend.

It happened that rumours were current in Jersey, that away to the north-west lay another island, in the interior of which a miserable breed of cattle roamed, though nothing whatever was known of the inhabitants—if any.

The Skipper therefore decided to make investigations, and the *Raven* set out one day on her voyage of discovery, and did, eventually, sight an island. We landed and found that it was inhabited, that the inhabitants called it Guernsey, and that they were quite civilised; in fact, some of the Head Men had reached so high a stage of civilisation that they had already formed an "Association" or "Club" in which they were accustomed to escape from their wives, for a little time, each day. Here they brewed—no doubt from indigenous herbs—most potent drinks.

We held much converse with these Head Men, and learned that some of them had also heard rumours that an island lay to the south-east, called Jersey, in which, so an old legend had it, a miserable breed of cattle once roamed; but they knew nothing of its inhabitants—if any. They, in fact, expressed much kindly sympathy at hearing that we had to sojourn among its aborigines!

On our return to Gorey, full of our exploit, we found a low fog-bank off the harbour but pushed merrily along till we should sight our old friend, the haystack, and pushed on until we had shoved the *Raven's* bows on to the shoal we wanted to avoid—if possible! That haystack was not there; the farmer, without informing us, had sold it, and had it removed during our absence! So no wonder that Kelly had a grievance!

Little matters like that did not worry us; no one interfered with us; we knew that we were entirely useless, and were at peace with all the world. I learned the rudiments of rifle-shooting, advanced much further in the art of sailing a boat, and acquired further insight into the customs and habits of the Royal Navy.

From this happy little family party, I was appointed away as junior doctor of H.M.S. *Immortalité*, first-class armoured cruiser, of 5,600 tons, armed with two 9.2 and ten 6-inch guns, carrying two torpedo tubes, and capable—so the Book said—of steaming 18 knots. In that last particular the Book erred.

She left for the China Station early in December, 1895.

CHAPTER II

1895-6

H.M.S. "Immortalité"—Sir Edward Chichester—The China Station — H.M.S. "Centurion" — Nagasaki — Hakodate—Chemulpo—Seoul—The Consulate General—Political Crisis—Russian Asiatic Squadron—The Mexican "Zarazoga"—Rear Admiral Oxley.

In H.M.S. *Immortalité*, I found myself, for the first time, one of six hundred officers and men, of every branch and rating which makes up a big ship's company. Scarcely sensible of the process, I discovered, in a very few weeks, that we all—strangers for the most part to each other and to our ship—had already become a community, with the common interest and pride in our ship, at heart, and with a common antagonism to any other ship which excelled us, or dare so much as hint of her superiority.

It may be that youth and enthusiasm, the novelty of my experience, and the vivid impressions of my first commission, abroad, lead me, now, to exaggerate this community spirit aboard the *Immortalité*, but with the recollections of all the ships I have served in, since, and of all the captains and crews of them, I believe that I am right.

We had as our Commanding Officer, Captain Edward Chichester (he succeeded to his baronetcy during the commission)—a man of extraordinary personality—and to him, quite unconsciously I am sure, this pride in our ship, so quickly developed, and so consistently maintained throughout a long commission, was entirely due.

He was then in the prime of life, and of unbounded energy. In face and figure he might have sat for *Punch's* cartoons of "John Bull"; fierce, truculent and hot-tempered he was as warm-hearted, single-minded, obstinate and unreasonable as a child. Every characteristic of him, good and bad, was big, and the biggest things about him were his love of England and of his own West Country, his love for his wife and family he had left there, his whole-souled pride in the Royal Navy, and his devotion to his own ship.

If he could read what I have written, he'd bang on his desk with his huge fist, stick out his great jaw and thunder at me, "You've made a fool of 'Old Chich'; scratch all that rot out; and the old *Immortalite* wasn't '*his*' own ship, either! she was '*our*' ship, Umph! Umph!"

That was perhaps one reason of his extraordinary popularity with officers and men; never can I remember him using the expression "My ship"—"My First Lieutenant"—"My Doctor"—"My steam-boat," etc.

Even on the quarter-deck, when seeing defaulters, it was the same. I remember a wretched little ordinary-seaman being brought before him for continual drunken, leave-breaking. "Umph! Umph! you miserable little rat," he growled, "what are you giving all this trouble for; why don't you steer clear of those lousy drink shops; aren't you man enough to know when you have had enough; you're bringing disgrace on the *Immortalite*—your ship—our ship."

It was "our" ship all the time, and that, though it seems a small thing, makes a vast difference. It encourages the humblest individual on board to feel that he is part and parcel of the ship, that his personality does help to form the character of the ship, her reputation in the fleet, and that he is not merely Ship's Cook's Mate's Assistant, No. 72501, no badge, or Ordinary Seaman, No. 197082, and nothing else.

When one has to serve—and live—with a Captain who behaves as though the ship, and everything in her, is his own private property, and the officers and men his own private employees; when even on shore, at the Club or in private houses, he introduces and refers to officers of the ship, to strangers, as "My Commander", or "My Doctor", or "My Major of Marines"—as though such lesser mortals had been born, nameless, only to add to his own importance, the habit begets exasperation and dislike of the ship one has to serve in—and contempt for him.

There was not an officer in the whole Navy prouder of his rank than Captain Chichester; that he commanded the *Immortalité*—that he had the good fortune to command her—gave him uncommon pride, but it never occurred to him that this should be a source of pride to anyone else belonging to her; by his whole demeanour and unreserved, blunt sincerity in this pride of ship and her crew, in his comradeship with all on board, he, without knowing that he did so, made every officer and man feel that to each one the *Immortalité* "belonged" as much as to the Captain himself—that she was "our" ship.

Though she presently earned for herself the nickname of "Happy and Chatty", throughout the Station; and though discipline may have been slack —perhaps it was—yet, when one recalls other commissions, since those days, it was, at any rate, an extraordinarily happy one—fore and aft. Many a time, since, have I met men of her old crew, and always it has been, "Never been in a ship like the old *Immortalite*; never served with a Skipper like him, since; a great man, 'Old Chich', sir!"

We knew him then, in those days, in the prime of his life, a born leader of men; and when he died, years afterwards, the Navy buried him with the affection they bore him for those best days of his.

What a pity for the happiness of the Service that his type, is, now, almost non-existent.

This feeling of comradeship in the *Immortalité* was due to him and to him alone, for none of the other officers of the ship were in any way remarkable; in fact, several were, deservedly or undeservedly, very unpopular on the lower-deck, and the gentle, kind-hearted Commander and the easy-going First Lieutenant both lacked the ability to inspire confidence among the men.

We had fourteen ward-room officers, of whom only two distinguished themselves in after years—our extremely picturesque and popular Marines Officer, C. N. Trotman, now a full General and a K.C.B., who commanded a brigade of the Naval Division in the Dardanelles, during the Great War, and J. W. L. McClintock, the junior of the watch-keeping lieutenants and the only ward-room executive officer to reach Flag rank, on the active list.

The Staff Surgeon, my " boss ", loathed the Service with a deadly hatred only equalled by that of the Naval Instructor; to them naval ship routine was anathema, as it was also to the quiet, conscientious Chief Engineer, who, however, kept his opinions on the subject to himself, and sought to pass the years from home, by studying Chambers' *Encyclopædia*, from " A " to " Z ", and gently leading conversation, at dinner, from Service topics, to the subject he had just read " up ".

The Fleet Paymaster, Charles Raxworthy—" Old Rax "—a Somerset man, a great character, who lapsed into dialect at the least excuse, made a splendid foil for our Devonshire Skipper. The two were the greatest friends and generally went shooting together, and were never so happy as then. The Skipper, however, would always take his dog, "Blucher"—a mongrel lurcher " of sorts ", who had been to sea for so many years that he was absolutely useless to shoot over. He would range, wildly, a couple of miles ahead, putting up everything, and then have an epileptic fit; after which he would dash madly across country. This meant a long pursuit until he was captured and sent back to the ship, under escort of the Skipper's coxswain, while " Old Rax " would rage at the waste of time, and the Skipper would growl an apology, "I've spoilt the dawg bringing him to sea and ' Old Chich ' ain't going to spoil his day's sport." The two of them would part " brass rags ", temporarily, until the Skipper brought out one of his special "eighteen-penny cigars " and mollified "Old Rax ".

We also had, in the ward-room, one of the "Hungry Hundred ", the "tactful " name given to the hundred R.N.R. officers who had, just then, been given executive commissions in the Navy. Not all of these " fitted " smoothly, and this one could not grasp the fact that the Navy seaman is not a merchant seaman, signed on for a three months' voyage, and cannot be treated in the same way; nor did he learn this in the three years he served aboard the *Immortalité*.

Recalling to mind those fourteen officers, differing as they did so greatly in their ages, up-bringing, professions, and outlook on the Service, one marvels that we could have lived together for the three and a half years, in a small ward-room, eating three meals a day—not counting afternoon tea—at the same crowded table, and remain friends. That we did do so, and that the final paying-off was an occasion of genuine regret, at breaking up the mess, was undoubtedly due to the fact that however much we disagreed among ourselves in other matters, we were united in our esteem for "Old Chich" and our pride in the old ship.

The *Immortalité* left England in December, 1895, carried out a few repairs at Malta, and left Suez, outward bound, on the 28th December, with the news that Jameson's Raid had started its dash for Johannesburg, and on reaching Aden, heard of its inglorious collapse.

On arriving at Hong Kong we joined the Flag of Rear-Admiral Buller, flying in the *Centurion*; both Buller and Chichester were "west country", and our ship lost nothing by that fact; indeed, we were often, I am sure, favoured above our merits, because of it.

Both the Flagship's doctors being on the sick list, I was sent to her for a cheery fortnight, during which time I gained my first experience of the Lee-Metford rifle, firing for her against an officers' team of the Rifle Brigade. As this new weapon had not yet been sent out to the ships on the station, they lent us rifles, and though none of us had fired with them previously, we were only beaten by four points. The comparatively small recoil impressed us greatly; the absence, next morning, of a black and blue right shoulder, impressed me even more.

The *Centurion* had, at this time, a very fine lot of officers—Captain Spencer Login, who resembled my own Skipper in many ways; Sir Robert Arbuthnot, her First Lieutenant; Dent, her Gunnery Lieutenant, even then discontented with the limitations of gunnery; McElwee, the tall Irish surgeon, for whom I deputised, perhaps the most popular officer on board; Pullen, the Secretary, surely the beau ideal of a Commander-in-Chief's secretary; Sir George Warrender, the Commander, who always seemed, to me, to be out of place on a quarter-deck; and many others.

Nagasaki

I returned to the *Immortalité* before she left on her first cruise, north, taking two Consuls to Takow, in Formosa—the only captured territory the Japanese had been allowed to keep after their Chinese war, two years ago. From the anchorage, the town where these two poor devils had to spend their next few years, looked so desolate that we pitied them most heartily. We also went to Pong Hui, in the Pescadores, where a bumptious little bantam-cock of a Japanese Customs' Officer boarded us, and before anyone could prevent him, shambled up to the Captain, who was striding up and down the quarter-deck, looked up at him, blandly, and squeaked out: "Whatta ura carga?" It was a sight for the Gods to see the Skipper's face as the little chap planted himself in front of him; he could have lifted him off the deck with one hand, easily, and would have liked to do so as he thundered out: "Guns! torpedoes! shells!—plenty of 'em", all of which the Japanese laboriously put down in his note-book, and, by now, somewhat alarmed, bowed himself backwards to the gangway.

Next we paid our first visit to Nagasaki and Japan, our realisation of the charms of Japan and the Japanese falling very short of anticipation when we found that the bowler hat, a drab kimono, and that abomination—elastic-sided boots—were the prevailing costumes of the men, and that the wearers were slightly swollen-headed as the result of their recent Chinese victory.

Here we met four ships of the German squadron, and commenced a very pleasant friendship with the *Irene*, which continued until we left the Station. Her officers impressed us as being tremendously keen on learning the secret of the relations between officers and men of the British Navy, in order to break down the barriers in their own. They started to play football, and were, I believe, the first German officers to play any game with their men. They found it difficult to understand how officers of our Service could play in a team captained by a stoker or ordinary seaman, and take orders from him, on the field. I do not think that they ever learned to understand this.

They had one peculiarity. You could not talk to one for half an hour, before he let you know that the Kaiser took a personal interest in him—in fact, their loyalty appeared to be more a personal one to the throne than to their country.

The delights of Nagasaki caused a good deal of leave breaking on this and future visits, and among the die-hards, in this matter, it was not good form to return until the local police had been informed and brought them back to the ship, under arrest. One, eminent among these die-hards, caused much amusement one day by walking down to the ordinary liberty-boat, carrying a Japanese policeman under each arm, and refusing to release them until he had brought them aboard to claim their reward for "capturing" him—a reward to be docked out of his own pay—of course. The Skipper's lurcher, "Blucher", broke his leave with the worst. Nothing would induce him to come on board until just before the ship sailed, and then he would come down to the landing steps, jump into a sampan, if no ship's boat were there, and the Japanese boatman would bring him off. The crew swore that he came down regularly to the harbour front, looked across to see if the ship were getting up steam, and if not went back into the town again. After returning on board he would always " fall in " with the other defaulters when the defaulters' bugle sounded.

Presently the *Immortalité* joined the rest of the fleet for her first visit to Hakodate, a place which always brings back the recollection of mounted paperchases to old China " birds ". Some sixty or seventy ponies of all descriptions (even a few imported walers), would have been collected in anticipation of the Fleet's visit, and every ship took it in turn to map out a course, the stiffer the better, and give a great " blow out " tea at the Sulphur Baths, along the coast, afterwards. The very keen among us used to go ashore directly after breakfast to make sure of hiring a " flier ", and hang on to him, all the forenoon, so that no one should "pinch" him. Plucky little ponies they were, with mouths of iron, and it required more than skill, a special guardian angel, in fact, to steer clear of the Commander-in-Chief in the first wild scramble at the start. What jostling, what squealing of the little stallions, what scrambling over rotten banks and filth-filled ditches, and what tosses we took in those wonderful days and what " teas " we devoured when we " fetched up ", covered with mud, at the Sulphur Baths!

I kept a record of my own " tosses " during the three occasions we visited Hakodate, and they averaged well over twice every paperchase. Nothing mattered much in those days, not even when my pony and I fell into the prized contents of a local farmer's " foo-foo " pit and I had to lead him into a near-by river, up to his shoulders, to wash him down, and myself, too.

On one of these visits we found that the local horse-keepers had raised the charges for their ponies; Karabash (our pronunciation and spelling of the name) was the arch villain in the plot, and this caused so much resentment that we decided to cancel all paperchases and proposed to " picket " his stables, in the most up-to-date manner. I believe that we did do so, and that I acted as a picket, but our lightning " strike " soon collapsed when the

Commander-in-Chief sent round invitations for his own very special paperchase.

The resentment and " strike " had one effect. We rubbed up our golf clubs; found some fairly suitable land, and eventually laid out a rough golf links—the first, if I remember rightly, in Japan.—Captain Chichester, as Captain of the Club, making his inaugural drive on 26th August, 1897.

The *Immortalité* visited Corea, for the first time, in October, 1896, anchoring at Chemulpo, the seaport of Seoul, the capital of that wretched country. Not far from Chemulpo she had passed the masts of the *Kowshing*, still showing above water; the sinking of this Chinese troopship, twenty-six months previously, had marked the actual commencement of the China-Japanese war.

Owing to the disturbed political situation at this time, the British maintained a small guard of eleven Marines at the Consulate-General, at Seoul, under the command of Captain David Mercer, R.M.L.I., of H.M.S. *Narcissus*, our sister ship.

I stayed with him, there, for a few days of great interest.

A really extraordinary coincidence occurred on board the tiny wooden Japanese steamer which took me up the Han river to Seoul. The only other European passengers were two very prim old ladies, the Misses Whitney, of Boston, dressed demurely—if incongruously—in black silk, and on their way to see for themselves if Korean missions were worthy of their financial support. We naturally yarned, and when they learned that I belonged to the Navy, they eagerly inquired if I had ever met a man who had married their niece, and could I tell them where, in the wide world, he then was? "He was a Marine Officer," they told me, "named David Mercer!"

When I promised to show him to them in an hour's time, they would not believe me until they actually saw his cheery face on the river wharf at Seoul.

On one night I dined with the British Minister (Jordan) and his wife, and spent an extremely interesting evening with them and Mercer. I knew that only sixteen months ago, the Queen and her Ministers had been killed during an army revolt instigated by the Japanese, and that a Japanese Commissioner and a new Ministry of his protégées had kept the King, her son, a prisoner in the palace until he managed to escape to the Russian Embassy, where he still remained; but now heard of the resulting chaos in the Government.

It was strange to realise that almost within a stone-throw from where I sat at dinner, the King, with the support of the Russian Minister and a guard of eighty Russian bayonets and a field-gun, was endeavouring to rule the country without reference to the Japanese Commissioner, while he, in the old palace, with a regiment of regular Japanese troops to maintain order, was trying to govern it without the King's authority. Stranger still it was to learn that neither King nor Commissioner controlled expenditure, and that, down in the Treasury, a Scotsman, Mr. M'Leavy Brown, kept a very tight hold on all the revenue which did manage to filter through corrupt officialdom to him. He had to decide what expenditure was legitimate and what was not. For instance, the King had given some impecunious young nobles high-salaried posts as Inspectors of Mines—mines that probably did not exist—and when *they* came along to the Treasury they were sent away without a sen; on the other hand, he had appointed a "Writer of the Queen's Elegy", in memory of his mother, and this the Treasury did allow because it was a definite custom of the country—and also because the sum required to keep alive the poet's muse was a very modest one.

The Japanese Commissioner came to him for money to improve the roads and sanitation, to pay the army and police, which the Japanese had reorganised, and to maintain the postal and telegraphic services, which they managed completely.

In fact, Mr. M'Leavy Brown controlled, to a considerable extent, the whole situation as these forces of reaction and progress schemed against each other, and slowly pressed on to the inevitable Russo-Japanese war, seven years later.

The Japanese had taken a very bad "fall" by announcing that the late Queen had belonged to the coolie class so that her assassination did not matter, and no national mourning need, therefore, be worn. If I remember rightly, the Korean national mourning is white, and owing to the prolonged period of mourning enforced and the frequent deaths of royal personages, the whole nation had been clothed in white for many decades. The order to discard mourning, therefore, entailed expense to the whole nation, irritated it far more than the assassination of a dozen Queens, and gave the King the opportunity of issuing, for once, a highly popular proclamation restoring his mother to royal rank.

In my wanderings about Seoul I had many opportunities of seeing the results the Japanese had obtained in reorganising the army and police forces. They were deplorable. I do not suppose that even our own army instructors, with all their experience of turning natives into smart soldiery, could have done better with the material the Japanese had tried their hands on. Even at the palace gates, where, if any where, one would have expected to see some signs of improved bearing, the sentries, dirty and unkempt, slouched indolently against their toy sentry-

Paymaster Captain Author

SHOOTING PARTY, ISLAND NEAR CHEMULPO.

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boxes, smoking cigarettes, their rifles propped up against the gate posts. As for the police, they looked the most timid, incompetent, useless force one could imagine, off a comic-opera stage.

In a small, tumbledown building, standing back from the main street, I was shown a very interesting bronze bell, supported on wooden blocks, splintered by age and its weight. It must have been nearly ten feet high and was richly embossed. No one knew its history, where it had been cast, how it got there, or how came the crack on one side of it. Even the Japanese, when they evacuated Korea, at the end of the 16th century, and removed the art treasures of the country to Japan, had left this, and there it stood, and probably still stands, a monument to the skill of some unknown founder in the dim ages past. The Koreans had a legend that a thousand years ago the Chinese Emperor of an ancient Dynasty had presented it to the, then, ruler of Korea. How it had been brought to its resting place or what accident on the way had made it for ever dumb, one could only surmise.

Outside the city walls, a small stream, thick with city sewage, flowed sluggishly across the main road, leading to the north, and in it I watched, one morning the countrymen dip their vegetables, to wash off the dust, before bringing them into the city for sale! No wonder that disease of all kinds was rife!

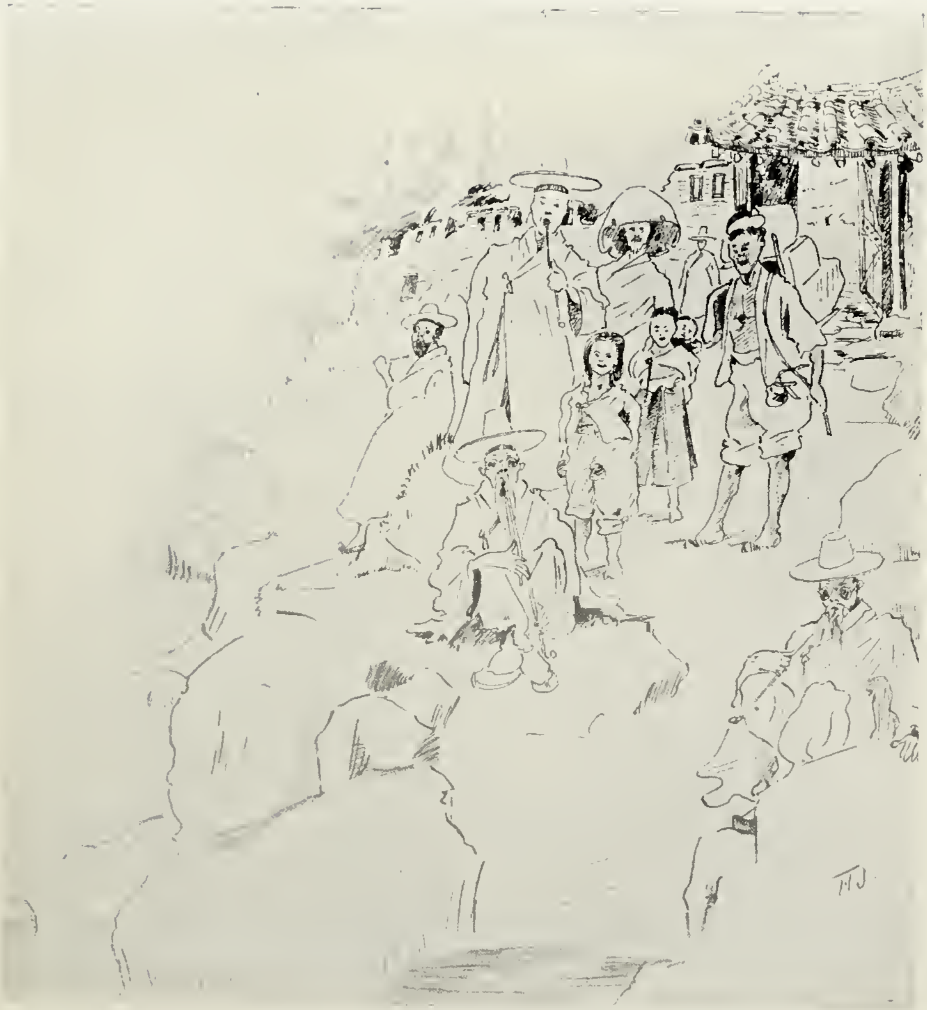
Practically everyone bore the horrid scars of the worst type of small-pox, and it was not unusual to see a child, suffering from this disease, being carried about on its mother's back and relieving the irritation of the pustules, by rubbing its face in her hair! They took less notice of small-pox than we do of measles

While I stood watching, that morning, the strange and unpleasing crowd passing in and out, a nobleman, on horseback, with a henchman leading his horse, with his retinue clearing a path for him, passed through the city gate on his way to the palace. His figure and features were absolutely immobile, he did not deign to notice the city rabble, his hands were folded on his lap until he passed through the battlemented walls, when he raised one delicate hand and held a fan across his face to ward off "evil spirits" which haunted the Capital. One could want no plainer evidence of the mediæval superstition which still gripped the country.

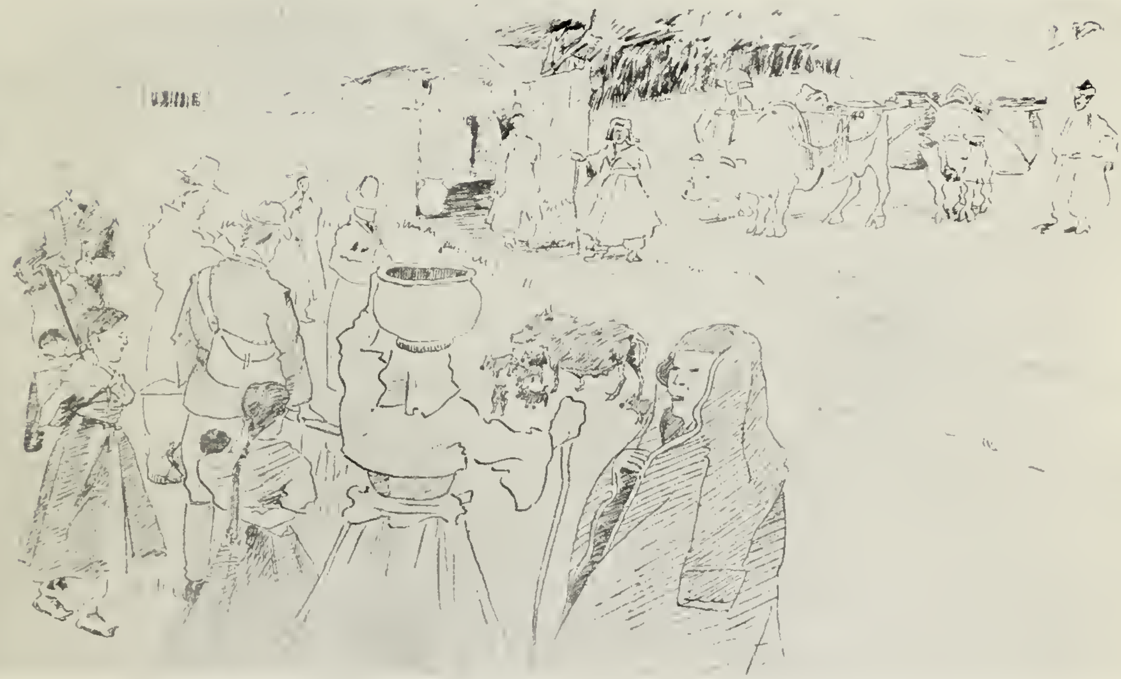
I did my host a very bad turn on the first morning of my stay, a typical lovely morning in that land of "the morning calm", when the air seems to sparkle like champagne and one feels exhilarated to a wonderful degree. I looked everywhere for my bath, and at last found three huge, earthenware jars on the balcony of my bedroom, full to the brim with delightfully cool, clear water. There were three of us in the house, including Mercer, so concluding that although their shape was somewhat unusual, they *were* our baths, I climbed on a chair and let myself down inside one. With my head outside the jar—like one of Ali Baba's thieves—I sat there, looking out over the city, its walls and the clear-cut mountain beyond, smoking the best cigarette, I remember, and thoroughly enjoying myself.

Mercer, however, did not share my enthusiasm when I expatiated, at breakfast, on my delightful bath—the three jars contained the drinking water for himself and his marines for the next month!

On my return to the ship, at Chemulpo, with my newly acquired knowledge of "water stowage" and political affairs, the presence of Russian and Japanese men-of-war, in the roadstead, had a fresh significance. On shore, too, the Japanese, with a far-seeing eye for the coming struggle, were commencing to build a railway to Seoul.



VILLAGERS OF KWONG WHA.



The sympathetic villagers offer to make a sucking pig run, and let us shoot it.

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Seoul

During our several visits to Korea, during the commission, we saw much of the work of the Anglican Mission, founded by Bishop Corfe, and as he had been, previously, a Chaplain in the Navy, perhaps we viewed it with more sympathy than is generally the custom among Naval people.

Bishop Corfe cared little to report conversions; he believed that the example of Englishmen living Christian lives among the Koreans, getting in touch with their family life, helping them in trouble and caring for them when sick, would form a surer foundation for the eventual spread of real Christianity than perfervid proselytising and the enrolling of thousands of converts—so called. In his "Mission of the Rising Sun" he made it a definite rule that any servant of the Mission who wanted to be baptized must first give up his job: when one thinks of that it means much.

He had a branch mission station at Kwong Wha, a collection of hovels perched on top of the black, mud banks of the Han river, half way to Seoul; and I stayed there, later on, with two others, while shooting over the marshes, and mud flats. We were then able to realise the life of complete abnegation those members of the Mission lived, and I do not know whether the effect on us was that of pity, for their apparently wasted lives, or of some feeling of reproach at our own somewhat selfish mode of life. Their example certainly humbled us, but not being idealists it, also, irritated us, a little.

We had taken our own provisions, and in a moment of thoughtlessness, tempted the youngest member of the Mission to his temporary undoing. Some months before, he had taken passage in the *Immortalité*, from Hong Kong, full of zeal and enthusiasm at the prospect of his work. Now we saw him, morning and afternoon, sitting with an old Korean tutor, in a little room, at the corner of the village, behind bamboo bars, learning the language. He seemed to have lost all his zest; he furtively followed us with his eyes as we passed with our guns, as though longing for one day of freedom, and on our last morning we determined not to be outdone in self-sacrifice, by anybody, and pushed our very last bottle of stout through the bamboos to him. For a moment he hesitated, but then concealed it under him.

We went on our way with a delightful feeling of righteousness, but heard, afterwards, that the poor wretch had been put on bread and water for a considerable period for breaking the rules of the Mission; so realised that even self-sacrifice has its pitfalls.

During the first year of the commission we met many ships of the Russian squadron of the Far-East, including the *Rurik* and the *Admiral Nachimof;* the first had been the most powerful cruiser afloat until our *Terrible* and *Powerful* took the water. The second had been built from the stolen designs of our own *Impérieuse* and *Warspite*, but whereas they carried four 9.2-inch guns in four barbettes, she mounted eight 8-inch. We frequently exchanged visits with the officers of the Russian ships we met, and they often came aboard to dinner parties in the ward-room or sing-songs on the quarter-deck. They were all men of fine physique and remarkable linguists but, almost invariably, heavy drinkers.

A fact which we noticed boded ill for the success of their squadron in the coming war. The officers of some of the ships, notably those which came from the Mediterranean to reinforce the squadron, disdained to know the officers of other ships. They let us know that they belonged to the Imperial Guard and that the others did not; they would no more dream of returning the official calls of these others than we should leave cards on—say—a tailor who had sent his business card to the ward-room. We actually had to be careful not to ask them on board together.

They were all convinced, even at this time, that war with Japan must come, and openly ridiculed their future adversaries. Indeed, it seemed difficult to imagine that the little Jap. officer, slovenly dressed, unseamanlike in manner and appearance, with none of the "officer" habit or mien in his bearing—apparently an inefficient landlubber in a badly-fitting, naval uniform—could possibly cope with such a foe, although we knew that they had shown much determination, skill and grasp of strategy in their Chinese war. We knew, too, that they had very fine ships building for them, in England, but could not imagine them handling them efficiently.

The relations between the officers and men of the two nationalities, differed absolutely. The Russian seaman appeared to be kept in order by a discipline so draconic as not to allow of any comradeship between officers and men. Discipline in the Japanese Navy seemed to be slack and artificial, and the social difference between lower-deck and quarter-deck almost unobservable.

The Russian blue-jacket, ashore, looked like seamen from head to foot, light-haired and blue-eyed; but they showed very little intelligence and walked aimlessly about, often hand in hand, with vacant, expressionless, Slav faces. The Japanese seamen looked like undersized men, always alert, generally chattering, unpleasing in appearance and manner, and with no characteristic of the sea.

Not infrequently a Russian ship would steam out of harbour for a few hours, and return; she had gone outside the three mile limit to hang a man! Punishment for striking a superior officer, however great the provocation, meant death—there was no alternative. One Russian captain—Molas of the *Bobr*, if I remember rightly—had struck up a great friendship with our Skipper. He hated the stern discipline of his Navy, but had to carry out the extreme penalty, once or twice, while the two ships were in harbour together. On his return from an execution he used to come over to the *Immortalité* and seek sympathy from Captain Chichester.

This savage discipline had been bred by tradition, and was continued by stupid indifference; although much modified after the Russo-Japanese war, it reaped its whirlwind of revenge at the outbreak of the Revolution.

In one respect the Russian ships of those days surpassed all others; the smallest gunboat could get together a "band", which played "music"; the bands of the bigger ships were a delight to listen to, and the *Rurik* herself had a brass band whose mellow, beautifully modulated instruments and wonderful execution, used to fill Nagasaki harbour, each night at sunset, with the glorious harmonies of their national anthem.

At Nagasaki we met, from time to time, most of the "foreigners", and into this harbour once came the *Zarazoga*, a little Mexican training corvette, commanded by a General—Mexico, presumably, not being able to produce a sufficiently trustworthy naval officer to command her. She carried numerous cadets, most of them grown men—and bearing marked evidence of mixed ancestry—in fact, most of them were as "black as your hat". For the honour of his country and the education of his "young gentlemen", the General gave an afternoon dance on board. He invited all the European ladies from shore, but only one or two arrived, and he showed *slight* signs of his irritation by stamping, backwards and forwards, cursing those of his guests who had arrived, and banging his curved sword-scabbard on the deck. Not being amused, we all fled and left him and his dusky young officers to dance by themselves.

Here, too, we met, for the first time, the *Grafton*, flying the Flag of Rear-Admiral Oxley, Second-in-Command of our China Squadron. The gruff little Admiral had the reputation of being the best boat-sailor in the Service, and if it blew really hard enough, enjoyed nothing more than driving his galley into a heavy sea, with weather-boards fitted and the crew lying out to wind'ard.

Society functions he hated; official dinners bored him "stiff". He had, of course, to give them, but after a dinner party, when thoroughly "fed up", he would sign to his Flag-Lieutenant, the *Grafton's* band would cut short whatever they happened to be slaughtering at the time, and bray out, "Now the day is over, night is drawing nigh", and he, himself, would disappear into his sleeping cabin. If any of us happened to be dining with him the quartermaster always had orders to call away the boat to fetch us, directly he heard that hymn-tune float across from the *Grafton*.

CHAPTER III

1896-8

P. W. Rimington—The Crocodile Trees—Chefoo—Wusung—Yokohama—Manslaughter Trial—Port Arthur—Lunch at Chinese Naval Club—Chinese Field Artillery—A Russian Breakfast—Ting Hai—Football—The Super-Taotai—Piracy.

A YEAR after we had been in commission, our very senior Navigating Commander left the ship, on appointment to Hong Kong Dockyard. He was accustomed, while in harbour, to take most of his exercise pulling round and round the ship, in the ward-room skiff, steered by his servant, a little, wizened, old man, rejoicing in the name of Juggings. He used to sing lustily—and probably quite unconsciously—as he tugged at the sculls, and sometimes voiced his thoughts in song as when, his allotted number of circuits having been nearly completed, we might hear him warbling:—

Oh! Juggins, my love; Oh! Juggins, my dear,
When we get aboard; bring me some fine beer.

P. W. R. Rimington took his place. This jaunty, high-spirited navigator had a fund of the most extraordinary yarns, so highly improbable that he quickly earned the title of " The Dockyard Liar "—the rude name we gave the Service newspaper, *The Naval and Military Record.* The following yarn is a specimen of his marvellous " gift ". We believed that he invented it, on the spot, to prove that " crocodiles have more than average intelligence"—which we had been debating, at dinner, with the usual entire ignorance of the subject and with the usual, heated, abusive observations on each others' intellect.

"My dear chaps," he began, "I can tell you a slight experience of mine which may assist."

Everyone listened; even the heavy-handed, wardroom marine servants ceased to clatter the plates.

"My brother-in-law put me up for a week's shooting, three years ago; he commanded the 58th Punjabis, you know. The village tank—'pond', my dear chaps—simply swarmed with muggars—'crocs', you'd call 'em, my happy ones. On our way out to a bit of a snipe marsh, one morning, we saw a muggar lying in the slime, such a 'whacker' that my brother-in-law—fine old chap he was—it was his fifty-first birthday, I remember—shot him and sent him up to the mess to be skinned. In the evening they showed us a tiny monkey they'd found inside him.

"Well! my dear fellows, I'd seen the little damned rascals, as nippy as fleas; the place swarmed with them and they wouldn't go near that tank, to drink, not if a muggar showed his nose twenty yards away. I didn't believe a muggar existed that could catch one.

"Oh yes! My lad; catch 'em; of course they do. My brother-in-law told me and took me down to the tank, just before sunset. We hid ourselves and waited. Presently—you won't believe this, of course—four or five—I can't remember which—five, I fancy—of the biggest muggars I'd ever seen, drew themselves out of the tank, crawled on to the firmer mud and began scraping a row of holes. When each of 'em thought his hole deep enough, he turned round, stuck his tail in it, padded the mud firmly round it and—I'd never had such a surprise in my long, and uneventful life—in less time than you'd call your soul your own—there were those four —no, *five* muggars, all upright on their tails, in a row, with their legs stuck at different angles and their jaws wide open, looking—my innocent old dears—just like trees struck by lightning.

"Down went the sun and presently out came a troop of the little rascals, from the dusky forest; nervous as cats they were till they found the coast clear. Not a movement from the muggars, not a sound, till twenty or more of those nippy little chaps were at the edge, drinking.

"Then one of them made a noise—coughed gently.

"My Aunt! You should have seen those monkeys bolt; they made for the nearest trees and scrambled up those 'lightning-struck crocs', like riggers. And my dear old sportsmen, as they went up, so those big jaws opened and shut and they went down—inside 'em!

"I think, gentlemen, you will agree with me that crocodiles have *some* intelligence," and Rimington, calmly accepting the salt-cellars we pushed across to him, beamed on us.

Perhaps a year afterwards, we suddenly asked him: "I say, P. W. R., when was your brother-in-law born—the 58th Punjabi one?"

For a moment he looked suspicious, and then out came—17th February, '42—which, when we had worked out the date from the details of his story, gave him his stated age quite correctly—and left us disarmed.

The *Immortalité* took part in the Diamond Jubilee celebrations at Cheefoo. Now, Chefoo, besides being the seaside resort for Shanghai folk, was then the favourite " nesting place " of the wives of American missionaries. In those days, at any rate, with them, the more the children the greater the pay, and with the dollar down to "one and tenpence", Malthus, himself, could not have gathered an audience to fill a sentry-box. Of course every "white" lady in the place, who could come on board to our "At Home", did come, although I am sure that several were somewhat uncertain what would happen that afternoon. Nothing did happen, much to the relief of the Staff Surgeon and myself—and the ill-concealed disappointment of our messmates, who had hoped that we should have been "lurked" for a job!

On the 1st July, 1897, the official opening of the Shanghai-Wusung Railway took place. The *Immortalité* went there because riots were expected on this occasion and the two thousand odd coolies who, hitherto, had earned their living by trundling merchandise between the two towns on their queer wheelbarrows, threatened to tear up the lines.

We arrived off the outer bar, two days before, sustained by a devout hope that the riots would materialise: as a matter of fact, they did not.

As the ship steamed inside the bar, towards Wusung, two big shells, from a Chinese fort, struck the water close to her; we immediately went to "action quarters"—the first time that any of us, I believe, had heard that bugle call—and "stood by" to fire a broadside if any more shells came along. Instead of which, up went six or seven flags of all nationalities, on the military masts, in rear of the fort, and we steamed to the inner anchorage, unmolested. Apologies—most humble and ample apologies—were made, and the Chinese officer of the Guard, from the cruiser anchored near, explained that a very important official, from Pekin, had come down to see the guns in that fort fired, and although the foreign instructors had pointed out that they might hit our ship, the old gentleman told them "that he didn't care a damn; he'd come all the way from Pekin to see those guns fired, and see them fired he would, whatever happened to be within range", or words to that effect.

This Chinese lieutenant who brought the apology, and looked fully conscious of the importance of his message, had no sooner come up the ladder and saluted the quarter-deck, than our First Lieutenant and P.W.R. leaped on him, banged him on the back, and dragged him down below to the ward-room. It turned out that the three of them had been shipmates, when midshipmen, in the same battleship, up the Straits, while he had been lent to the British Navy for training. He stayed to lunch, and it amused us to notice how much pleasure this gave to the Chinese servants, and how great the deference they paid him—much more than they sometimes paid us.

I happened, about this time, to be involved in a manslaughter case, eventually tried at Yokohama, and, I believe, the last such case to be tried in that extra-territorial court.

As the result of a drunken brawl, a seaman, belonging to a full-rigged British sailing ship, lying in Nagasaki Harbour, stabbed another, when they returned from shore, late one night. An English doctor, practising at Nagasaki, and myself, did what we could for the poor chap, in the impossible conditions we found, working by lantern light, under the poop. Afterwards, while waiting for a boat from the *Immortalité* I stood in a patch of bright moonlight close to the break of the poop, talking of the tragedy to the First Mate. While we talked, I noticed a man come out from under the fo'c'sle and creep towards us, in the deep shadow of the deck house. As I warned the First Mate the man rushed at him.

He turned round, knocked him down with one straight blow, and continued the conversation as though nothing out of the way had occurred. A couple of the man's mess-mates came aft presently and dragged him back under the fo'c'sle. This incident made a great impression on me, much greater than did the stabbing affray.

The poor chap who had been stabbed, died three days later, as I realised when I went on deck that third morning, looked down the beautiful harbour and saw the ship's yards "scandalised". As a result I had to attend the trial, held at Yokohama, by kind old Judge Stephenson, and, for this purpose was "lent" to the happy little gunboat *Redpole*, which happened to be stationed there. In spite of the trial, this turned out to be a very gay episode of riding by day, dining and dancing by night.

But at the trial itself the demeanour of the prisoner was so genuinely distressed that we all pitied the poor devil and felt that he was as much a victim of his surroundings and the appalling liquor supplied in Japanese drinking saloons as was the dead man. He did all he could to save trouble; when asked if he pleaded guilty, or not guilty, he mumbled: "Well, of course, sir, I did it", and would have pleaded "guilty", had not the Judge interposed, quickly, with "The prisoner pleads, 'not guilty'". He kept on saying, tremblingly, "I did it, sir, I did it; he was my best pal", and everyone felt relieved when he received only a few months' imprisonment in the prison hulk at Hong-Kong.

In November, 1897, the Germans leased Kiaochow and the Russians were bent on seizing Port Arthur. The Chinese Government could do nothing but make feeble protests and England naturally objected to these Sea Powers sitting down outside the sea-door to Pekin, and looked about for some strategic point to occupy and neutralise their efforts. Of course this is ancient history, but history, however ancient and well remembered, is interesting to recall when one has watched it developing.

All three Powers commenced to reinforce their fleets in the Far East.

At this time the *Immortalité* lay in Nagasaki in company with practically the whole of the Russian fleet, wintering there—as usual. But this winter their numbers gradually dwindled—and dwindled generally at night time. Soon we learnt, probably from Japanese sources, that the missing ships had begun to make themselves "at home" at Port Arthur—very much "at home". Eventually, we, ourselves, were ordered away, at short notice, and, at Port Hamilton, joined up with every available ship of our squadron: *Centurion*, *Immortalité*, *Undaunted*, *Narcissus*, *Iphigenia*, *Pique*, *Algerine*, *Redpole* and *Alacrity*. Rumours of war, and a feeling of great tension existed in the squadron, every ship of which had, almost simultaneously, disappeared from the port she had happened to be in, to rendezvous here. Naturally the Russians' curiosity was roused, and they sent their small craft scurrying about to find what had become of us.

At any rate, we had scarcely assembled in Port Hamilton, when, in through the entrance, came the little sloop *Koreetz*, and she had scarcely lost her way before her Skipper shoved off in his galley to pay his duty call on the Commander-in-Chief. Captain Chichester happened to be with Admiral Buller when Captain Lindestroom was announced and bowing profusely, explained that "He'd just *happened* to put into Port Hamilton on account of some engine-room defects, which, fortunately, would not take more than an hour to repair!"

Captain Lindestroom was—as were all the Russian Admirals and Captains—a great admirer of our Skipper, and probably thoroughly enjoyed him blurting out, "Engine-room defects? Ugh! Ugh! Why don't you tell us you've come to spy out the land? Ugh!"

Directly he got back to the *Koreetz*, off went that little ship into the night.

Next day, we and the *Iphigenia* proceeded to Port Arthur and arrived on December 29th, finding five Russian ships anchored there and the Flag flying in the *Admiral Nachimof* at the outer anchorage. When our Skipper called on the Russian Admiral, he received *permission* to anchor *temporarily*—this in a Chinese military harbour, with a Chinese Squadron anchored inside, and the whole anchorage commanded by powerful Chinese forts—on Golden Hill, and the Tiger's Tail.

The Russian intentions could, therefore, not be concealed any longer.

The *Koreetz* had followed us into Port Arthur, and when Captain Chichester came back, after his interview with the Russian Admiral, he told us that Captain Lindestroom, bubbling over with the news that he had discovered the whereabouts of the British Squadron, had been brought in while he and the Admiral were chatting.

"'Any more engine-room defects? You old Poke-your-nose!' That's what I said to him," the Skipper growled, and we could imagine him squaring up to the Russian, poking out his great jaw, shaking his huge fist in his face, and probably banging him on the chest, growling good-humouredly all the time, while the amused Russian Admiral looked on.

His "diplomatic" style appealed tremendously to the Russians, accustomed as they were to an excessively polite and formal etiquette.

Telegrams flew backwards and forwards between us and our Embassy at Pekin; the temperature fell to 14 degrees F.; ice crusted round the ship's sides whenever the wind fell, and, expecting a declaration of war at any moment, we spent the time trying to keep warm, looking at the six 8-inch guns of the *Nachimof*, trained our way, and to the signal mast on shore, from which our Consul signalled the arrival of telegrams.

We lunched one day—one bitterly cold day, with the officers of the Chinese Peiyang Squadron at their Naval Club ashore. Most of the senior Chinese officers present had received training in our Navy, so could speak English well, and after a few "sherry and bitters", out came all the very oldest Service "chestnuts" that they remembered. They apologised sadly for the barrenness of their club house, and explained that the Japanese had taken everything of value, including some priceless bronzes, when they had evacuated Port Arthur. They still clung to the hope that the presence of the *Immortalité* meant checkmate to Russian plans, and this was really the origin of the lunch party.

I sat next to a young, recently promoted Captain, and learnt afterwards that he had been the only surviving officer of a small cruiser in the Battle of the Yalu, and had brought her safely into harbour, after beating off several Japanese pursuers with the only undisabled gun on board. He was regarded by the others as a great hero—he certainly was a modest one.

On the other side of me sat the Paymaster-General of the Port Arthur garrison; a nice, lucrative job, I should imagine. At any rate, he was dressed very richly, was very fat, bubbling over with good cheer, and as merry a soul as one could wish to sit next to —*if* we had been able to converse. "Vely good," completed his knowledge of English and "vely good" described the courses which followed each other, as he pointed with his fat, long-nailed finger to the Chinese, and then to the translated English menu, in front of us, and patted his digestive organs to accentuate their delights. If conversation flagged with my other neighbour, he would nudge me, draw from under his furs a gold watch and show me the picture of a lady, devoid of raiment, beautifully enamelled on the back. "Vely good," the old rascal would chuckle, and having thus done his share to amuse me temporarily, give himself up again to the delicacies before him.

Subsequently, we invited them all to lunch with us, but on the day appointed it blew so hard that they could not come, much to our very genuine regret, though much to the delight of the gun-room officers, whom we asked up to fill their places. They, poor wretches, were trying to "work off" a mess deficit so had not many luxuries at that time.

On one occasion we watched a brigade of Field Artillery drilling on the huge parade-ground at the back of the town, under a hill-slope, crowned with the old battlemented mud wall on which the Chinese had, during the siege by the Japanese, hung alive, by their entrails, several captured enemy. German instructors had made this drill the most mechanical and theatrical I have ever seen. The fantastic and rigid attitudes and contortions of these splendid-looking fellows, the simultaneous stamping of a thousand felted boots on that hard, frozen mud, may have taught them discipline, but could not teach them to fight that long row of Krupp guns intelligently. However, it is more than probable that they never received any practice ammunition, so could never learn to do so. My old friend, the Paymaster, might possibly be able to explain why!

On New Year's Day, 1898, officers from the Russian ships called to wish us "greetings", and we had to return these calls on the 14th, their New Year's Day. It fell to my lot to be one of the two "told off" to return the call of the gunboat *Gremiatschy*, anchored more than two miles away up the harbour. We had a very cold passage in a nasty little sea-way and, having been taken down into their warm ward-room, intimated our earnest desires for their happiness in the coming year, gulped down two or three vodkas and smoked sufficient Russian cigarettes, we then intimated to our hosts our still more earnest desire to leave. They would not hear of it; they had actually sent back our steamboat, and now refused absolutely to make a signal for her return. They sat us down at breakfast (eleven o'clock) and kept us there until nearly half-past three, plying us with drinks which we could not refuse, and drinking toasts to all the crowned heads of Europe whom they could remember, or invent.

When my fellow victim and myself thought our troubles must be almost over, the skylight blinds were drawn, the port-hole flaps were dropped, and into the darkness entered a bluejacket bearing a huge silver punch-bowl, on the top of which crossed-bayonets supported a foot-high cone of sugar, aflame with spirit. How those flames did leap and flicker as I held hard on to the ward-room table while the ward-room itself revolved!

Eventually they called away one of their own pulling boats to take us back. This must be the end, we thought, and mustered sufficient control to take our leave and climb down into their boat, in a dignified manner—at least I hope that it was so. But not a bit of it; two of them scrambled down after us, a trayful of glasses and two bottles of champagne were passed down into the boat, and not until then did we shove off on our long pull to wind'ard, in that bitter wind. Actually, on the way back to the *Immortalité* the four of us drank that champagne—first to the Queen, then to the Czar, then to England, then to Russia, and after they had made certain that we had no "heel taps", our hosts solemnly took our tumblers, and their own, and dropped them into the sea. The tray was empty and so were the bottles by the time that we got alongside—the same description did not apply to us.

Our companions came aboard, and in the warmth of our smoking-room one quickly went to sleep, but the other, thinking that he was on board a Frenchman, began to abuse the English until our messmates' patience becoming exhausted, they both were gently assisted down into their boat, with its shivering, half-frozen crew. The cold air revived them sufficiently to order the coxswain to take them to their flagship where, doubtless, they continued their New Year's libations.

Our gratitude for their hospitality was a somewhat prolonged affair! and somewhat diminished by the knowledge that, according to their Navy Regulations, all expenses connected with the entertainment of Foreign guests are paid for by the Government—that, in fact, the presence on board of us two unfortunates had enabled them to indulge in an orgy at their Government's expense—and ours!

I have told this yarn in some not too refined detail to illustrate the habits of the average Russian Naval officers of that time, and have only to add that such behaviour appeared to cause no surprise or resentment to the docile peasants at the oars.

Two days later the *Immortalité* and *Iphigenia* left Port Arthur. The British Government had acquiesced in the inevitable, and British prestige, among the Chinese has, perhaps, never fully recovered from this particular incident. The occupation of Wei-hai-wei later on certainly did nothing to recover it. This, from the Chinese point of view, simply implied that we had joined with the other Western Powers to grab what we could, and that all "foreigners" were now tarred with the same brush.

The "Boxer" Revolution followed as one of the indirect results.

From Port Arthur we steamed to Ting Hai, in the Chusan Archipelago, at the mouth of the Yangtze and anchored close to "Joss House Hill", with its celebrated temple, containing the most complete and life-like models illustrating the various forms of punishment to be expected in Hell—almost more unpleasant, though not so monotonous as those contained in our own Naval Discipline Act.

The walled cemetery on the slopes, beneath this Joss House, contained a monument to the memory of eleven sergeants, fourteen corporals, three buglers, and three hundred and forty-one men of the 95th Regiment, Royal Irish, Royal Artillery and Madras Regiment, who died during the military occupation of this island, from 1841 to 1846. Their graves, and the graves of those who died during the further occupation in 1863, lay round the foot of this monument, and were in a fair state of repair.

To judge by the welcome of the local population whenever we landed, these soldiers must have made themselves very popular during their stay.

I converted the usual military parade-ground into a football ground by shifting the usual military masts and using them as goal posts. No one seemed to object, and we generally had much difficulty in preventing the onlookers taking part in our games. Our last match there, played against the Flagship, was watched by a crowd of at least a thousand of the townsfolk, including the local Taotai, in his palanquin of State, under his official umbrella and surrounded by his gaily dressed "runners" and "bearers". We had some half-dozen petty-officers, armed with single-sticks, to keep the touch lines clear, and at half-time a whole mob of Chinese, rich and poor, old and young, secured the ball and had an exciting and enthusiastic struggle under "Rugby-Soccer" rules; afterwards they followed us down to the leave boat as excited as an English Cup-Tie crowd.

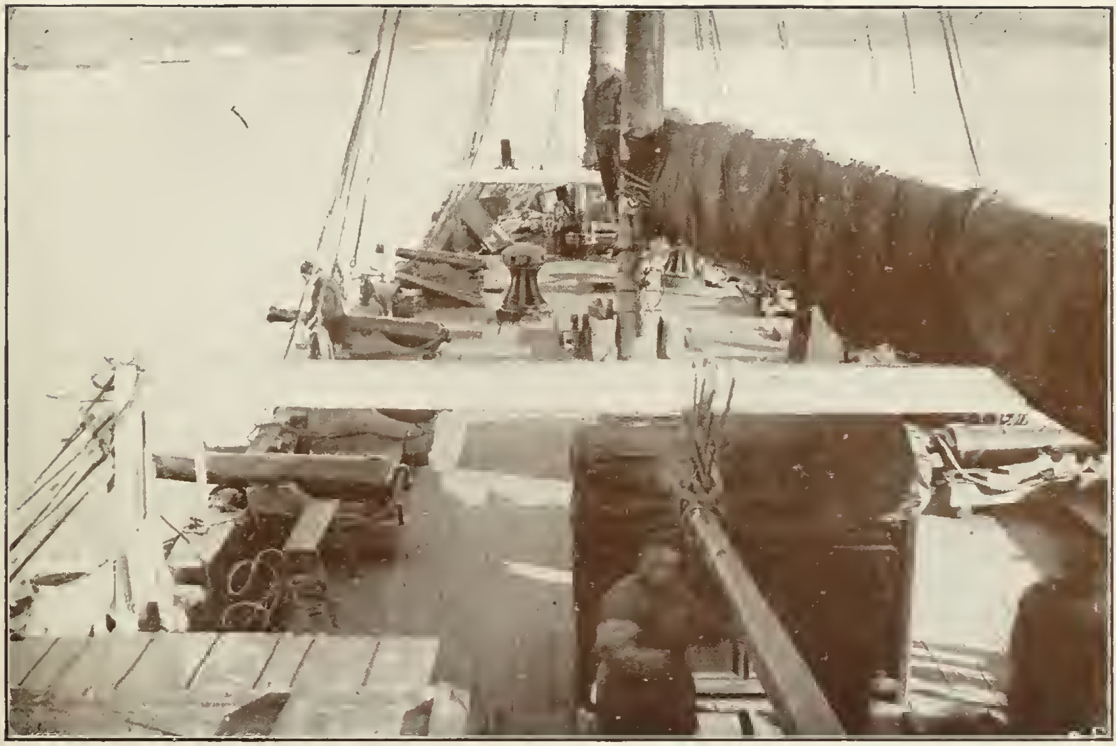
Nevertheless, in a few days arrived a portentous document from the Super-Taotai, on the Mainland—a kind of G.O.C. of the Province of Chekiang—complaining that we had destroyed military property and terrorised the "multitude".

So no more football!

There was a small antediluvian battery some three miles along the coast, and the Commandant, who lived there with nobody but three decrepit old Chinese soldiers to "do" for him, gave tea and cakes to some of our midshipmen, who had wandered into it one day. He, too, had a grievance against this same Super-Taotai, who had announced his intention of coming to inspect the battery, its little muzzle-loaders *and* the garrison—and at this unusual time of year. The Commandant had his correct number of guns and rounds of grape-shot, in their bamboo-cane baskets, piled up behind them, and he had his correct number of forty-six uniforms and banners, but only those three old decrepit men to fill them, wave the banners, and shout out the ceremonial welcome. He was at his wit's end, poor old chap, how to fill them because, for some reason or other, coolies could not be hired just then for love or money.

He knew well enough that the Super-Taotai had only warned him of his coming to give him time to hire a garrison for the occasion, but woe to him if those uniforms were not filled for the solemn farce; the poor old gentleman, with his pleasant tales of local piracy and decapitations, was shaken to the "core".

Piracy still flourished among the Chusan group of islands, but as a somewhat unpopular form of industry, handicapped, to some extent, by the sailing of merchant junks in company, for mutual protection, and by them all being armed with a few small-bore, muzzle-loading, pop-guns, doubtless effective as carronades at close quarters—if the crews were not too timid to fire them. At this time it existed in two forms—the endemic or aristocratic, and the sporadic or plebeian. The first—a decaying industry—was conducted on the grand scale, by men who made a livelihood out if it and would not demean themselves by doing any other kind of work. For their especial benefit the Government maintained two old cruisers in the neighbourhood, one of which towed two pirate junks into the harbour, during our stay, having previously executed the crews to avoid any unpleasantness, in case her Skipper had made a mistake. The sporadic, or plebeian form—the more prevalent type—generally owed its origin to some favourable opportunity or unusual combination of circumstances, such as the becalming of a single merchant junk near a village, whose local crops or fishing season had failed, or whose own junk had been destroyed, and whose hungry villagers could not resist the temptation to push off in their boats and overpower the crew. As a police force, to prevent such occasional acts of violence, and also to collect the taxes from the island villages, a large fleet of war junks, maintained by the Provincial Governor, had their head-quarters at Ting Hai, and their gaily-coloured flags and streamers made a bright



A War Junk at Ting Hai.

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splash of colour on the muddy, yellow water at the foot of Joss House Hill. Most of these war junks looked very smart and clean; they mounted eight to twelve smooth-bores, on wooden carriages, each of which was marked with a "broad-arrow" at the breech, copied from our own Admiralty mark for "Joss", so that they should shoot straight. On the arrival of any of them from sea the rest fired "three-gun" salutes with great liberality, and again, whenever a "scarlet-umbrella" official went off to call or inspect. The number of "three-gun" salutes made us wonder who paid for all the wasted gunpowder, and how bored "stiff" must have been the guns' crews, if they had to sponge the guns after every salute.

The Chusan Archipelago is a paradise for sportsmen, and we took full advantage of the enormous number of wild fowl, of all sorts, in its marshes, paddy fields, and vast mud flats. So much has been written about sport on the China Station that it is unnecessary to write more than that we, in the *Immortalité*, had our full share of what was "going" —trust Captain Chichester for that. To give some idea of the multitudes of wild fowl in the vicinity of this particular anchorage, we had to switch on the ward-room lights, in the evenings, while the wild swan flighted over the ship from the local marshes to their night haunts on distant mud flats. To this, P.W.R., our credible Navigator, would certainly add that the noise they made effectively prevented conversation.

CHAPTER IV

1898

Reinforcements for all Fleets—Seizure of Kiaochow—Port Arthur and Wei-hai-wei—Dewey—Spanish American War—Manila—Battle of Manila Bay—Ode to Victory—German Effrontery—Captain Chichester Intervenes.

AT the beginning of March, 1898, the *Immortalité* lay in Hong Kong harbour, and we there watched the results of German and Russian policy.

First came the *Navarin*, *Vladimir Monomach*, and the *Rossia*, from the Mediterranean: they paid their ceremonial calls and left for the north, to complete the seizure of Port Arthur.

After them, came the obsolete *Deutschland* and the *Gefion*, under the command of the genial Prince Henry of Prussia, who took the opportunity, while the weird old ironclad was being once more repaired, to play much polo—somewhat too vigorously; and to give a grand " ball " on board her. Her officers talked much about their Emperor and their "place in the East", but did not refer to the fact that though the *Deutschland* looked quite an imposing "mailed fist", when steaming *in* or *out* of harbour, she did not look quite so dignified when, as actually was the case, the *Gefion* towed her *between* ports.

The Prince had the good fortune to hear, from our Navigator, P.W.R., of a really wonderful polo pony—'The Rat,' owned by his brother-in-law, in the 15th Mahrattas. According to the Navigator—

and he should have known—his brother-in-law always reserved him for the last chukkar of every match. In fact, P.W.R. told the Prince that the cunning little "cuss" always took a glance at the score-board as he went on to the ground and, if his side were "down", used to seize the first opportunity to pick the ball up in his teeth and gallop with it through the opponent's goal.

When he had told us this yarn, some months before, we had, naturally, asked what happened if the ground did not have a score-board?

P.W.R. was delighted at our acumen and intelligent interest.

"My dear old pals! That was the strange thing about 'The Rat'; my brother-in-law, Homfray—good sportsman, Homfray; he was eaten by a tiger, poor fellow, part of him—always swore that he learnt the score from the other ponies or their scyces, as they came back, and only looked at the score board—when there was one—to make sure. At any rate, you unbelievers, he never tried on any dodges if his side were leading, and I do know that he won the Native Regiment Cup, in 'eighty-five, when the Bikanir fellows were 'runners up'. Two minutes before time, the scores were equal, and the Bikanir fellows were pressing like 'Billy Loo'; from a bit of a 'mix up' in front of the Mahratta goal, 'The Rat' picked up the ball, doubled round—old Homfray nearly took a 'toss'—tore down the ground; was ridden off, a bit, near the Bikanir goal; so went round it; brought the ball through the wrong way; dropped it and kicked it back, between the posts, with his hind hoof!"

He had not told this corroborative detail to the Prince, who presently steamed away, through the Lyemoon Pass, on his way north to complete the "lease" of Kiaochow with ceremonial display.

The *Powerful*, having completed her main-bearing defects, went north to Chefoo; the big battleship *Victorious*, which had only scraped through the Suez Canal with much difficulty, came out, coaled and followed her; the *Barfleur* and *Terrible* were coming East as fast as they could, and our whole China Squadron, except the *Immortalité*, gradually assembled at Chefoo, to complete the possession of Wei-hai-wei.

"Hands off, while we grab; count our ships and take notice that we are in earnest," must have been the gist of the communications flying between the European Chancelleries at this time.

Italy, to prevent her existence being forgotten in the scramble, sent out the *Marco Polo*, and, mustering in the harbour, the United States Asiatic Squadron, under Commodore Dewey, began to paint themselves a dark, brownish-green, to assert *their* place in the East and capture the Philippines from the Spaniards.

It may be remembered that this approaching Spanish-American War had developed as the result of a newspaper "stunt" in Cuba, and the romantic adventures there of a newspaper correspondent. The resulting wave of sentimentality—and business foresight—throughout the States, followed by the blowing up of the U.S. *Maine*, in Havana Harbour, had made war inevitable.

In the sacred cause of succouring the oppressed Cubans, the United States determined also to succour the oppressed Filipinos and—incidentally—to grab Manila and its naval arsenal, by a strange coincidence just as the other Powers were grabbing *their* strategic points in the East.

The officers of Dewey's Squadron came on board the *Immortalité* frequently, and were naturally extremely conscious of the difficulties of the job before them, however little—or however much—they knew of the inefficiency of the Spanish Squadron and the obsolete defences of Manila.

Meanwhile the British occupied Wei-hai-wei, and, to illustrate the tension existing, at that time, between our ships lying at Chefoo and the Russian fleet lying at Port Arthur—only distant some six hours' steaming—the men of our ships slept at their guns for several nights, and both fleets sent their light craft out to patrol. A "fault" in the telegraphic cable between the two ports had cut off all communication; and until it had been discovered and repaired the abrupt silence caused a mutual apprehension of war.

On the 23rd April war was declared between Spain and the United States; whereupon Dewey withdrew to Mirs Bay, round the corner, out of sight, and finished his painting. Five days later he and his squadron sailed from Manila, and on the 1st May, a Sunday morning, achieved his first and possibly his only objective at this stage—the destruction of Admiral Montojo's collection of ships.

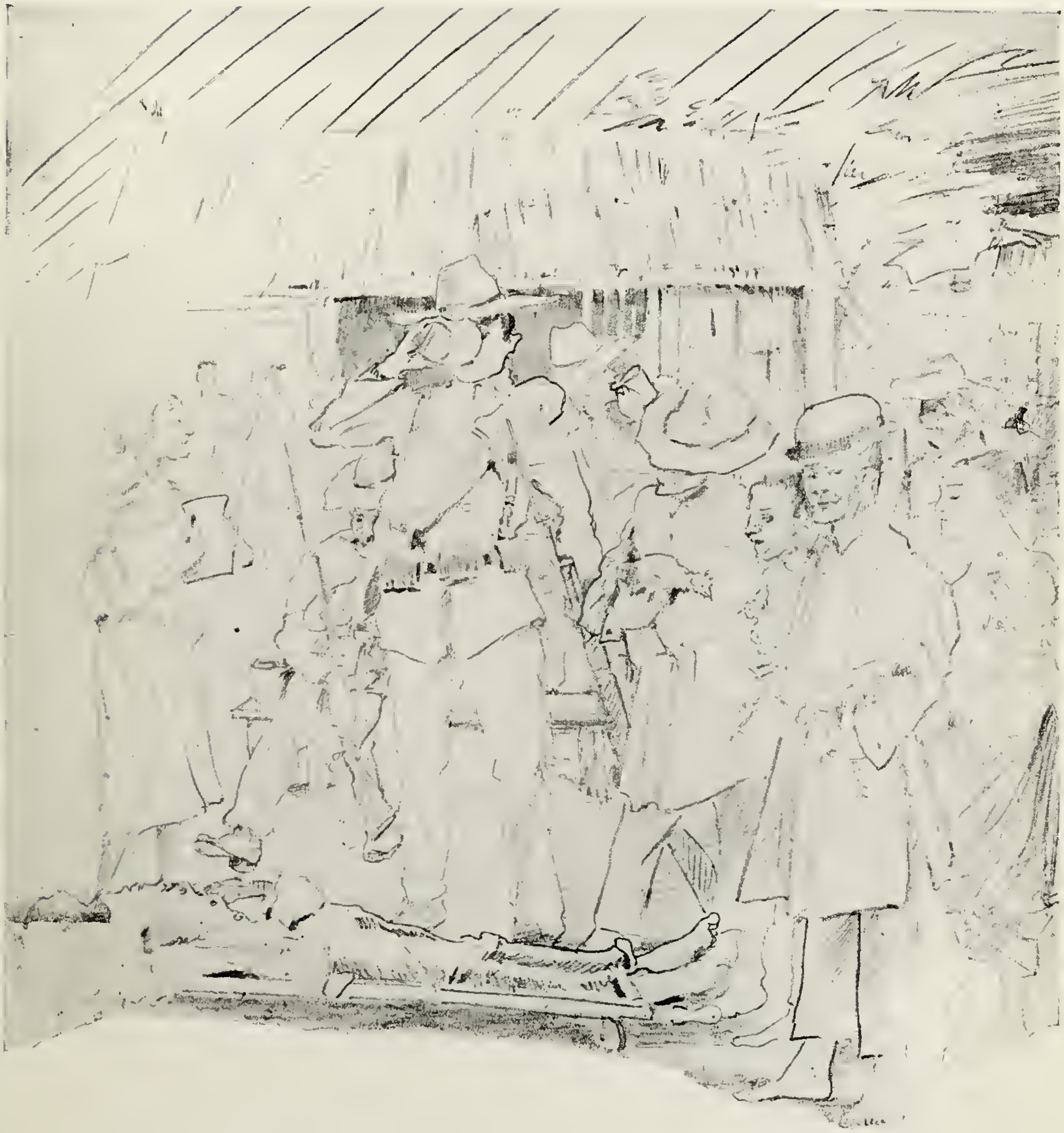
Three days later the *Immortalité* followed to watch further developments.

On the 7th May, early in the misty morning, we approached the fortified island of Corregidor, guarding, with the batteries on El Fraile, the entrance to Manila Bay; Dewey had slipped past these, unscathed, on the previous Saturday night. The Spanish flag still hung over Corregidor, and a signal, in the International Code, hung limply down, warning us not to proceed through the mine-field. However, we took no notice of the warning, being fully aware that the alleged mine-field, if it did exist, was only a dummy one, and steamed up the shimmering bay to anchor some two miles off Manila, abreast the batteries on the Luneta, and close to our old friends in the *Irene* and the French *Bruix*. Eight miles to the westward we saw Dewey's squadron lying off Cavite Arsenal, among the wrecks of the Spanish ships, and, half-way between, the wrecked and burnt-out Spanish transport, *Mindanao*, which had tried to escape, unsuccessfully, after the action. The American ships appeared to be undamaged—as they were.

Behind the City of Manila, with its spires and towers and battlemented walls, and far inshore, right round the sweep of the bay, dense masses of smoke from burning villages marked the withdrawal of the Spanish lines before the pressure of the insurgents.

Two things which Dewey did, at once showed that he had fully grasped the situation. In order to prevent precipitate interference from Washington, he cut the only telegraph cable, and, having captured two thousand Spanish regulars in Cavite, he returned their arms and sent them into Manila to help keep out the poor, down-trodden Filipino insurgents for whose benefit all this "hub-bub" had been arranged.

This naval episode showed very forcibly the limitations of Naval Power outside its own province —the destruction of enemy naval forces and sea communications. Dewey, having completed these objectives, now found himself powerless to do anything towards capturing Manila itself. He had not enough ammunition to engage the shore batteries along the Luneta, which mounted four-inch Armstrong B.L., and eight 8.2-inch howitzers (muzzle loaders) —even if that would have caused the surrender of the city, and, in fact, he concerned himself chiefly to prevent the insurgents capturing Manila themselves, before the army, necessary to complete his work, should arrive from San Francisco. San



THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

A SCENE IN MANILA AFTER A SKIRMISH WITH THE REBELS

This scene was sketched by the author not far from the English Club at Malate. The "casualty"—a result of the usual night's sniping—had died on his way to hospital in the Intramuros. The weary bearers put the corpse down outside the first "posada" and proceed to slake their thirst. The Filipinos in the foreground are carrying their favourite fighting cocks.

Francisco must have seemed a long way distant as he watched from the *Olympia's* quarter-deck the smoke of those burning villages, drawing nearer and nearer to the city, day after day.

Many people possibly remember the wild rejoicing throughout the United States at the news of the "Battle of Manila Bay": some writers, with characteristic modesty, claiming it to be a second "Trafalgar". I wonder whether, if they had known the actual details of the action, read the ships' logs, known of the helpless inefficiency of Montojo's squadron, realised that, as a consequence of the action, the wild, fierce Filipino insurgents now thought that they had a free hand to slaughter and loot indiscriminately, and that the thousands of European women and children in Manila were in terrible danger—I wonder if they would have thought it such a cause for national pride?

They struck medals of Dewey, with "Dewey Did It" inscribed on the reverse, and wore them—everyone wore them—sometimes with incongruous effect, as, for instance, when a friend of mine saw a lady on Broadway wearing one. She evidently intended very shortly to contribute one, if not two, more little citizens to swell the glory of the States, and she proudly wore her medal with the *reverse* side exposed!

As a matter of fact, Montojo's squadron had slipped up the bay on the Saturday afternoon, only a few hours ahead of Dewey, anchored under the modern battery of Cavite, with its two 5.9-inch guns, and given "general leave" to one watch. (Some people said to both watches!) When Dewey attacked at 5.30 next morning, the leave men had not returned, the ships were still at anchor, and the fire they did open was practically harmless.*

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*According to the *Boston's* log, several ships were under way.

They hit the *Boston* twice, and the *Baltimore* once with anything heavier than a three-pounder; and, except for damaging the recoil cylinder of one of the *Boston's* 6-inch guns, did no damage of any importance. Indeed, so futile was their fire that, on board one U.S. ship at least, the hammocks which had been piled up round the guns and wheel for protection from splinters, were sent down below, out of the way, shortly after the action commenced.

After firing for two hours, at an average range of 3,000 yards, Dewey drew off, uncertain of the result, piped his men to breakfast, and called his captains on board the *Olympia*, no doubt being anxious to learn how much ammunition they had remaining in their magazines.

He did not renew the action until 10.35 a.m.—an interval of two hours.

The Spaniards, watching from Manila, thought that he had been driven off and, as far as I remember, telegraphed to Madrid to that effect; the Spanish crews, however, took the opportunity of these two hours of respite to scuttle those ships which still remained afloat and "get ashore out of it"! One ship, however, the *Don Antonio de Ulleo*, which had only four officers and seven men on board when the action commenced, and whose Chief Engineer and Paymaster had fought the small "Q.F." guns on her fo'c'sle, fired a few plucky shots when Dewey returned to the attack; but was quickly set on fire and sunk.

The Spanish Flaghip, *Reina de Christina*, of 3,500 tons, with six 6.3-inch guns, suffered terribly. She managed to get up steam, and is said to have slipped her cable about 7.0 a.m., and endeavoured to close the American Squadron, followed by the *Isla de Cuba* and the *Isla de Luzon*—two modern torpedo-gunboats. However, an 8-inch shell exploded under her bridge, disabling her steering gear and killing and wounding over a hundred men in her battery. She became the target of the whole squadron, and quickly caught fire astern, burning furiously and becoming unmanageable.

In the Spanish Admiral's report he writes: "The ship being out of control, the hull, funnel and masts riddled with shell, confused with the cries of the wounded, half of the crew out of action, among whom were seven officers, I gave the order to sink and abandon ship before the magazines exploded, requesting the *Isla de Luzon* and *Cuba* to assist in saving crew."

When we examined her wrecked upper-works ten days afterwards, the port half of the bridge stood vertically; several machine guns on the poop were alone undamaged.

When Dewey eventually did renew the action, he met with no real resistance, and the two 5.9-inch guns on Cavite do not appear to have influenced the action in any way whatever.

Of course we quickly got in touch with very many American officers. Most of them were still rather excited about that day's work, but none more than the First Lieutenant of the *Olympia*, who sat himself down in his cabin, straightway, and wrote a poem—an epic poem—which cannot be allowed to perish. Dewey had it printed, and sent copies to the *Immortalité*; space, however, prevents me from quoting more than a few of its sonorous stanzas.

It commenced:

> "At break of day, Manila Bay,
> A sheet of limpid water lay,
> Extending twenty miles away;
> Twenty miles from shore to shore
> As creeping on, a squadron bore
> As squadron never moved before."

Presently the action commences, and the poet puts in some very "hot stuff":

> "Then every second heard the roar
> Of shell and shrapnel bursting o'er
> Our brave, undaunted Commodore."

As the Spanish shells would *not* burst, this is, of course, poetic licence, and when the "fuss" is over, his soulful muse finds a Divine explanation:

> "Dawned on the Fleet that Dewey led,
> A Miracle! while Spaniard bled,
> For on our side was not one dead!"

(The Spaniards had lost 147 killed and 420 wounded).

Part of the "Miracle" is accounted for by the fact that most of the Spanish shells had been loaded in 1884.

Then, after more details of the Homeric struggle, comes the concluding pæan of victory:

> "The Battle of Manila Bay
> From mind shall never pass away,
> Nor deeds of glory wrought that day;
> For mid that battle's awful roar,
> The Spanish pride, to rise no more,
> Was humbled by our Commodore."

So, if they, on the spot, thought it wonderful, it is excusable that the people, away back in the States, thought it wonderful, too.

However, the sense of proportion—and humour—had not entirely deserted all of those officers, and our Gunnery Lieutenant, Tommy Thorpe, obtained much useful information as to the advantages—and disadvantages—of the American "smokeless" powder, their telescopic sights and range-finders. I, too, learnt the unquestionable fact that if "loading numbers", in the excitement of action, *will* drop shells on their feet or cling to them, too long, while the breech-blocks are being closed, they do, inevitably, suffer injury—and many of their bluejackets *were* so suffering.

Commodore Dewey came on board the *Immortalité* on one or two occasions, and created a very favourable impression among us by his entire absence of swagger. To keep the insurgents out of Manila until the American army arrived caused him as much anxiety as his depleted magazines. Brumby, his Flag Lieutenant, would have passed as an English N.O. anywhere.

Shortly afterwards, the German *Kaiser* (Admiral Diedricht), the *Prinzess Wilhelm*, and the *Kaiserin Augusta* arrived, and their officers landed, in uniform, and fraternised, ostentatiously, with the Spaniards.

Dewey had declared a blockade and made it effective; but the Germans, in defiance of International Usage, came in and out of harbour, took no notice of patrolling craft, and threatened to fire on them if they tried to stop them.

They brought along a "supply" ship, the *Petrach*, and, under cover of night, lighters would come off from Manila, fill up with provisions for the beleagured city, alongside her, and be towed back, up the Pasig river, before day-break—of course an utterly irregular proceeding.

Dewey could obtain no redress, so Captain Chichester anchored the small gunboat *Linnet* inside the mouth of the Pasig, between the two small Spanish batteries there, so that lighters could neither enter nor leave.

Later on, when the first transports arrived, the *Kaiserin Augusta* followed them into harbour, hanging on to their starboard beam, and ostentatiously and unnecessarily saluting the American Admiral—Dewey had, by this time, been promoted.

They actually interfered with the course of hostilities at outlying places among the islands; and also threatened to prevent the American Squadron bombarding Manila because the city lay immediately in the rear of the batteries on the Luneta.

Captain Chichester acted as intermediary between the Germans and the Americans, and, one forenoon, towards the end of July, when the tension between them became acute, he had a very stormy interview, in his after cabin, with the German Flag Lieutenant.

He had been ill for some days and should have been on the "sick list". I had strongly advised him to remain in his bunk, but did not suggest that twice—anybody who knew him will understand why. Being rather anxious about his condition, I waited until the Flag Lieutenant came out, looking very flustered, and then went in. The Skipper sat at his knee-hole table, wearing the Shantung silk jacket he always wore in hot weather, looking ill and full of wrath, puffing vigorously at, probably, his third strong cigar that morning, and surrounded by a pile of International Law books.

He banged his fist on the desk and growled out: "What d'you think I told that young 'cock-a-whoop'—ugh!——? I showed him everything, down in black and white; told him that they ought to have known all about it. He said that old Diedricht hadn't got any books, like these (and he banged a law book, furiously); I told him that I didn't suppose he had; that his people had only just come to sea; hadn't learned sea manners, and that 'Old Chich' was here to teach 'em. I sent him away with a 'flea in his ear' to tell old Diedricht that if he tried any of his dodges here, he'd have to reckon with 'Old Chich' first—ugh!"

Eventually, when all was prepared, when the American army was ready to advance, the depleted magazines of the squadron filled, and the monitors *Monterey* and *Monadnock* reinforced him with their heavy guns, Dewey did come over, from Cavite, to bombard the defences of Manila and support his troops; and when his squadron got under way, the *Immortalité* got under way, too, and steamed in between the American and German ships. This effective "gesture"—horrid word—made Captain Chichester's name almost as popular, in the States, as Dewey's had been.

But the Germans had not finished their underhand work, even when the city had surrendered. Shortly after four o'clock that afternoon the *Kaiserin Augusta* commenced to raise steam in all boilers—we knew that by seeing the volumes of smoke pouring from all her funnels; and hardly had the Spanish flag been hauled down at the south corner of the Intramuros, at 5.45 p.m., and the Stars and Stripes hoisted (by Brumby), than she commenced to work cables. A very few minutes later, and her steam barge came tearing out of the Pasig river, towards her. As she ran alongside, the ship's cable was "up and down", and before the steamboat had been properly "housed", in her crutches, the *Kaiserin Augusta* got under way, steaming very fast out of the Bay.

She went to Hong Kong, and the Officer of the Guard, who boarded her, was informed that "no event of importance had occurred up to the time of her departure"! Forty-eight hours afterwards her Captain, in frock coat and sword, went across to the English Commodore, in the old *Victor Emmanuel*, and reported "that Manila had fallen before he had left"; he regretted that his previous information had been incorrect, but "he had been acting under orders from the Kaiser"—who, therefore, learned the news forty-eight hours before the rest of the world.

We understood, at the time, but I am not certain if this is correct, that the Spanish Governor-General had taken passage in her, from Manila, and had actually been on board her steamboat when it dashed out of the Pasig river.

CHAPTER V

1898-9

Manila—Desperate Condition of City—Spanish Troops—Dominican Monastery—Spanish Surgeon—British Jute Ships—Spanish Priests—Fall of Manila—Relieved by " Powerful "—Hong Kong—Skittles—The Skipper's Whist—Fashoda Scare—Ordered Home—Labuan—Singapore—Plymouth—Pay Off.

MANILA, however, did not fall for more than three months after the *Immortalité* arrived in the Bay—three long and weary months for the men of the ship and for most of the officers. I could fill a whole volume with incidents of those months, and the ever present anxiety lest the American troops should arrive too late to save the city from being sacked by the Filipinos. The Spaniards, themselves, though covering the walls in Manila with contemptuous pictures of the " Yankee Pigs ", longed more eagerly even than Dewey himself that they would come before the resistance of their dispirited troops gave way.

Until the Americans did arrive in sufficient numbers to interpose themselves between the insurgents and the weaker portions of the defences, the Filipinos pressed the siege as vigorously as they were able. Native regiments, hitherto loyal, began to desert. On one such occasion, almost within sight of the ship, a native regiment, holding an advance trench, let the Filipinos pass through them at night. They had been fighting all day and the Spaniards had not; yet, at night—the worst time—a Spanish battalion, which should have relieved them, rested in rear. Six hundred of them were stabbed and hacked to death that night, without a shot being fired.

In a month the whole semi-circle of defence had been driven in some four miles, the Spaniards always burning villages as they fell back. By the end of June the insurgents had approached, in several sectors, to within two miles of the Intramuros, and the Spaniards began to prepare its three-hundred-year-old walls for a last desperate resistance.

At night the cathedral, churches, monasteries and convents within those battlemented walls were generally silhouetted, vividly, against the glare of burning villages inland, telling of yet another front-line trench to give way. In fact, when the spirits of the Spanish troops reached a very low ebb, we used to be relieved, after each night's rumble and rattle of fighting, to see the Spanish flag still flying over Santiago Fort, at the end of Intramuros, and over the Polverin de Malate, two miles along the beach towards Cavite.

When things became rather desperate, a large number of women and children were brought out into the bay in steamers. The various Consuls and the foreign senior naval officers arranged the details, and the fatherly old French captain of the ship which had relieved the *Bruix* made no secret of the fact that many of his refugees had been selected with a view to becoming "wives to my young officers"; nor were the Germans much less reticent.

The climate of Manila during the summer months is usually detestable; but when no gale blew or rain fell we officers used to go ashore, and were allowed to wander freely beyond the city as far as many of the trenches. The midshipmen used to make a "bee line" for them, hoping to borrow a rifle and get a shot at an insurgent. Generally, however, we walked out to the English Club at Malate, about half a mile inside the Spanish right flank at the Polverin. Stray bullets often came into the club, and on one occasion the Chinese bar-tender threatened to give notice when a bullet smashed a glass in his hand. Only in the last month of the siege did the ice factory close down, and until that happened we would sit on the top of the flat roof enjoying an iced drink after our hot walk, and watch the sniping in the trenches beyond.

On one terribly hot day we played cricket against the English residents on the Luneta—that place of ill-omen where so many "suspectos" had been shot. These English in Manila had gained the esteem of both Spaniards and Filipinos, and they maintained their prestige at a high level throughout the siege. It was pleasing to realise that, in these islands of intrigue and corruption, an Englishman's word actually was quite sufficient security throughout the Philippines.

Outside the cafés, in the Escolta, crowds of Spanish officers could be seen, at all hours of the day, smoking cigars and drinking liqueurs, while in the half-deserted suburbs troops of half-starved, dirty, unkempt cazedores wandered from garden to garden, searching for a few vegetables, or chasing a stray chicken to add to the coarse bread and bean soup issued to them. They needed a great deal more than these rations to maintain their courage and health —poor fellows—in that depressing time and climate; though very unsoldierlike in appearance, they had one redeeming feature—they did keep their rifles clean.

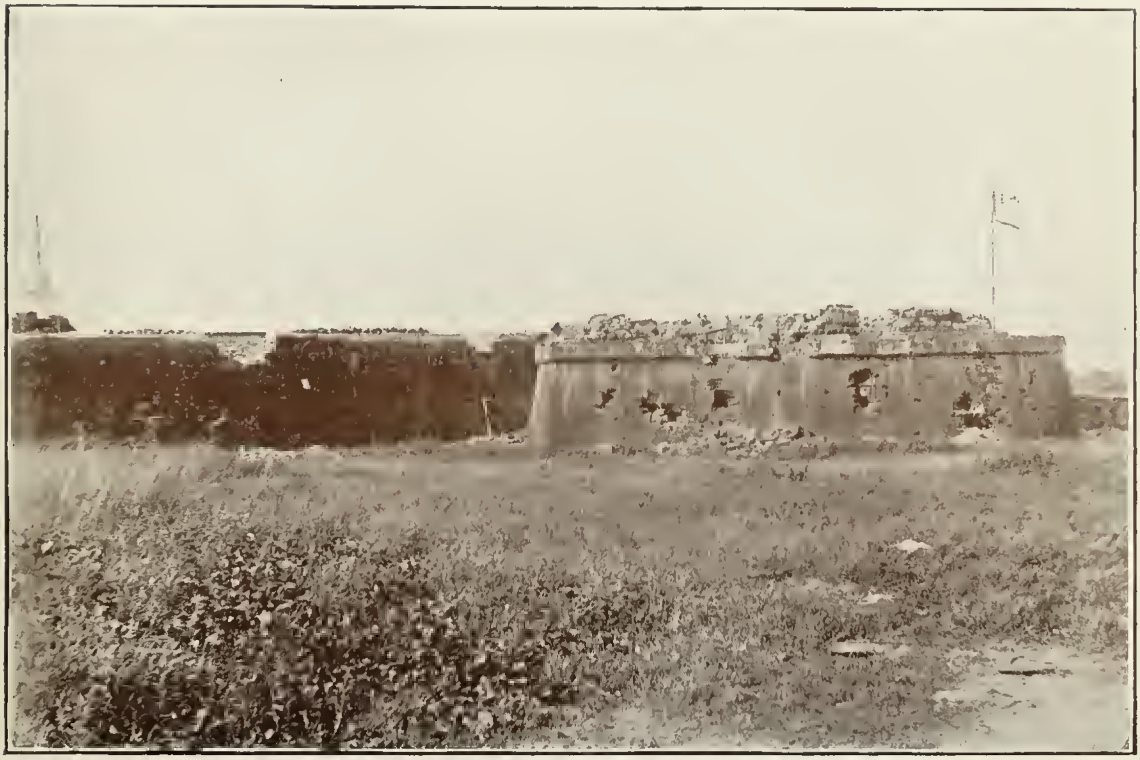
Among the 15,000 to 20,000 troops defending the city, regulars, cazedores and volunteers, the artillerymen alone maintained their smartness; they had a great reputation for bravery, discipline and devotion to their guns, and well they earned it. Even on the day when Manila fell and the resistance which the rest of the army "put up" was only just sufficient to "save face", we saw a group of artillerymen, on one corner of the Polverin de Malate, replying to the fire of the *Olympia's* eight-inch guns, with one little field-gun and a still smaller howitzer. The ship had already blown great gaps in the old walls, but they continued to reply—a perfectly foolish feat—until a big shell blew them and the corner of the Polverin into the air.

When we visited this Polverin, a day or two afterwards, we saw not only the rugged gaps made in the masonry by the *Olympia*, but in between them numerous smooth, circular depressions about eight inches in diameter. These had been made by English smooth-bores one hundred and thirty-six years previously, when an expedition from India had captured Manila. On that occasion the city had surrendered the day after peace had been signed in Europe, and, by a strange coincidence, Manila had now fallen the day following the suspension of hostilities. It was very characteristic of Spanish habits that, during these long years, the English-made holes had never been repaired.

After the Insurgents had captured the Military Hospital, outside the city, the Army doctors utilised the Dominican Monastery, within the Intramuros. Inside this building, in spite of overcrowding and a lack of many essentials, there was an air of cheerfulness, efficiency and devotion to duty which compared very favourably with the military atmosphere elsewhere.

Flies, however, swarmed horribly.

A big space, at the top of the wide staircase, had



Polverin de Malate, Manila.
Large holes made by U.S. Fleet—Photographed the day after bombardment.
Small holes made by English Fleet one hundred years previously.
The right half battery was destroyed by the Olympia's 8-inch shells.

been converted into an operating-room, and seemed to be the rendezvous of everyone who had nothing better to do than saunter through it. I can see that crowd of inquisitive idlers, laughing and jesting, while the very small and plump surgeon—a civilian, and the best in Manila—worked away with his fat, ring-covered fingers, smoking cigar after cigar, and keeping up a running conversation with his promenading audience; and while the anæsthetist did his best to keep the wretched patient unconscious with the inadequate supply of chloroform at his disposal.

Whenever I watched an operation the surgeon, before commencing, would always first proffer me his knife. On one occasion another naval doctor returned the courteous bow and extended his hand for the knife, whereupon the little surgeon hurriedly withdrew it and commenced proceedings—and possibly remembered not to be so courteous next time.

During the first six weeks after we arrived at Manila, some half-dozen English ships lay in the bay, either ready for sea, or because the railway had been "cut" and they were, therefore, unable to obtain their cargo of abaca—the raw hemp. The Spanish authorities refused, for some weeks, to give them their sailing papers, and the Masters, in a body, often came on board the *Immortalité* to get our Skipper to forward their tales of woe to the Consul General, on shore. Their spokesman was a Scotsman with white hair and long beard, a gentle old man, who looked like a Minister of the Free Church—slow of speech and patriarchal. He worried, chiefly, about his crew. The monotony of delay had made them "fretful"; indeed, one of them, he told us, speaking as though it were only a little thing, "had gone for him with an axe, only the day before yesterday, and if he did it again he would have to be angry with him; and he didn't like being angry with any of them!"

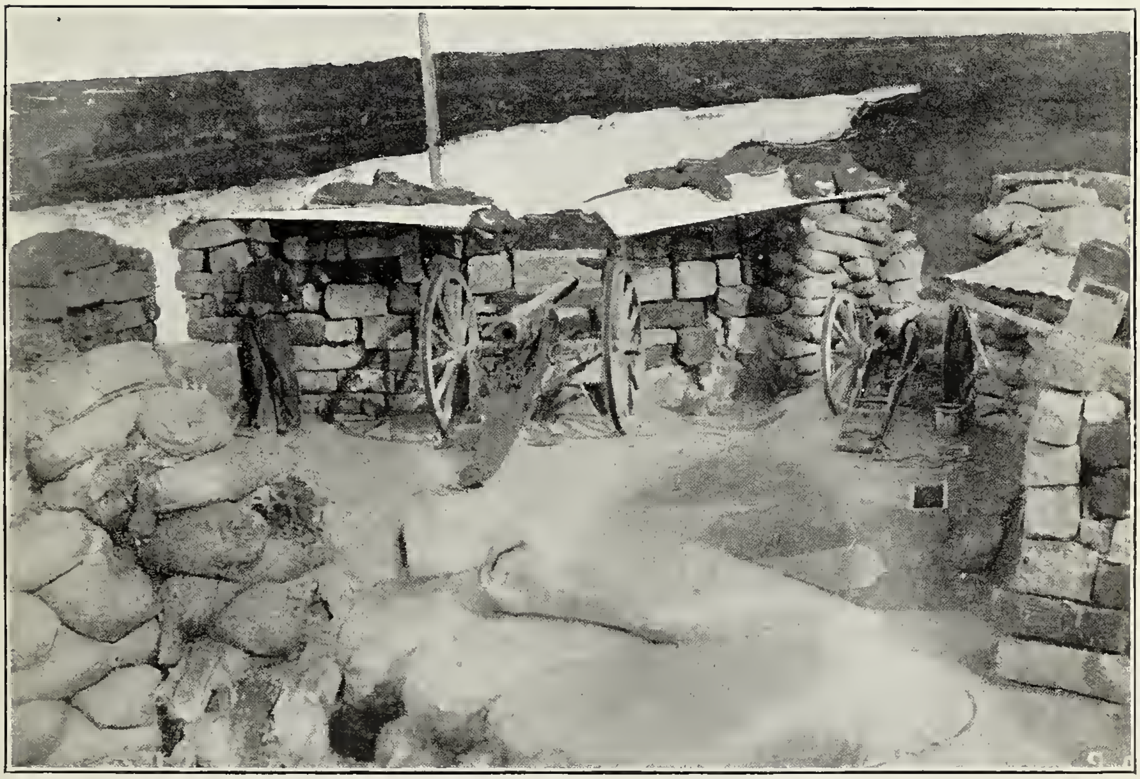
Fortunately, things were arranged, and the ships eventually sailed, apparently before it became necessary for the old gentleman to risk losing his temper.

Throughout the siege the celebrated cigar factories continued work, and their pretty little Mestizas—half-caste Filipino work-girls—each puffing her cigar, seemed to be the only cheerful people in Manila.

Towards the end the merchants began to conceal their stores of food, hoping to sell them to the Americans at great profit. Such things as flour, tinned milk and canned meat became scarce, and the depression among the people was the more evident.

We would watch the crowd promenading on the Plaza Magellanes, on the banks of the Pasig River, in the cool of the evening—Spanish ladies pale-faced and weary, haunted by the dread of what the night might bring—their children limp and listless with the heat of the day—officers who should have had something better to do—business men and officials discussing with grave and anxious faces the day's bad news—and, among them all, the refugee village priests, those of them who had been lucky enough to escape the vengeance of their villagers when this final revolution broke out. Men of bestial face and figure, with huge paunches, in sandals and dirty brown cowls, they waddled ponderously along the banks of the river, leering at the little laughing mestizas.

At the end of this promenade rose the eastern bastions and the steep, battlemented walls of the age-old Intramuros, with their interminable row of little bronze guns, green with more than three hundred years of exposure, and with the sand-bags and



POLVERIN DE MALATE. BATTERY 2.3-in. FIELD, 2.3-in. HOWITZERS.

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baulks of timber, newly placed there, to keep off the insurgents if the worst came to the worst, and everybody had to seek a last refuge behind them.

At the base of these walls flowed the little river Pasig, bearing its water-lilies from the big lake to the sea, and concealing—at high tide—the grated openings of those awful dungeons into which "suspectos" used to be thrust at *low* tide—heaven only knows how many. To be a "suspecto", in those days before the final "rising", meant disappearance; every inconvenient native became a "suspecto"; to refuse a daughter or wife to some of those satyrs of village priests and a man became a "suspecto"—a posse of guardia-civilia from Manila—and he vanished!

Of what foul crimes those dungeons could have told as the waters of the Pasig swirled through their gratings; and how we officers, waiting for our steamboat to take us back to the *Immortalité*, lying out in the shimmering bay, loathed the sight of those priests. Administrators as well as pastors of their villages, they had, by their misdeeds, been the chief cause of Spanish misfortune.

Wonderful men those Spaniards must have been who, three hundred years before, had reared that great walled citadel, nearly a mile in length and filled it—unfortunately for them—with cathedral, churches, convents and monasteries!

How unworthy were their successors of this nineteenth century.

For some short while the spirits of the garrison *did* rise . . . They heard that a fleet had left Spain to drive the hated Yankee from Cavite—and believed it. But only the poor old *Vizcaya* and some feeble cruisers crawled as far as Port Said—and then crawled back again.

Eventually the end came; Manila streets were patrolled by Americans—many of them in their

1860 Civil War equipment—and the American army, turning right about, faced the now thoroughly disillusioned insurgents. Those Spanish troops, who retained their discipline, assisted them in guarding the city.

How very quickly, thereafter, the tension grew between them the following incident proves. Only five days later I walked through the American lines in uniform, and when approaching the insurgent lines a picket of Filipinos stopped me and would not let me pass until I had satisfied them that I was the doctor of an English ship and not an American. Once satisfied, they gladly led me to where a few wounded required treatment.

Four weary weeks followed, while prices soared in Manila and many undesirables arrived to batten on the American Army. Then the *Powerful* came to relieve us, and off we went to Hong Kong, cheered lustily by the *Olympia*, and heartily glad to get away. During those fifteen weeks the climate and lack of fresh provisions had had a bad effect on the health of everyone on board, fore and aft.

We were covered with "prickly heat"; nearly all of us had lost weight, and all were dead sick of Manila. The Ward-room diary for the 4th September, reads: "Tired of everything—tired of Manila—tired of each other—tired of waiting for a mail—tired of bad eggs for breakfast."

Cricket, tennis, golf and skittles at Hong-Kong, and general leave for the men, soon restored us to wonted health, and the old ship went into Kowloon dock and had twenty-five tons of barnacles scraped off—her legacy from Manila.

At this time I was selected to shoot in the annual rifle match between Hong-Kong and Singapore. Twelve months before, I had won the championship aggregate at the Hong-Kong Naval and Military

LA CONFIANZA
CAMBIO
RELOJ

American Troops in their 1860 Civil War Equipment.
Disarmed Spanish Troops in foreground.

Rifle Meeting, but now, probably owing to the long months at Manila, failed badly in the practice shoots, so dropped out much disappointed.

Writing of skittles reminds me of the great popularity of that game out East. Every place where Englishmen resided had its skittle alley—"bowling alley" they called it—and there was keen competition between ships' and shore teams. After dinner we very frequently "changed", went ashore and played vigorously until the last boat went off. No one was more enthusiastic than our Skipper. He always "captained" our team, and I think that he was never so "lovable"—it is the only word which describes the feeling every one had for him then—as when he threw all his enthusiasm and energy into this game—happy as a boy—wet through with exercise and the damp heat of the "alley"—standing at the bowling end—a real John Bull—with feet wide apart, dressed in a canvas shirt, open at the neck, and his old check shooting knicker-bockers, the inevitable cigarette hanging from his upper lip and a glass of Japanese beer somewhere handy.

His extraordinary personality made more friends among the residents—tradesmen and merchants—in the bowling alleys of the various ports, and made the Navy more popular than all the "at homes" and lunch parties one could give in a hundred years to them and their wives.

The captains of some ships live rather lonely lives in their cabins; our Skipper hated to be alone. If he could not get ashore, or the ship was at sea, he would send his long-nosed valet "Willums" into the ward-room, directly after evening "quarters", and again after dinner: "The Cap'n's compliments, and would any gentleman care to play whist?"

Well, we sometimes rather tired of these interminably long afternoons and evenings at whist, and on one occasion, at sea, no one volunteered when the familiar message arrived. We had scarcely settled down comfortably in our own smoking room when, up on deck, then down below, the buglers sounded off "Night Quarters" and off we all dashed to our "stations". We were kept "at it" for half an hour, and when everything had been "secured" and peace reigned again, in blustered the Skipper for a whisky and soda, looking like a big boy who had lost his temper and now came to say he was sorry and "make up". As he drained it down—scowling and grunting—he growled out—"Hope you like 'night quarters' better'n a game of whist. Who'll make up a rubber with 'Old Chich'? Ugh! Ugh!"

It was absolutely impossible to feel any resentment; though after that it did not *often* happen that he missed his game.

To continue the yarn, the "Fashoda" war scare now commenced (October '98) and we prepared for war in grim earnest. We shipped a new 9.2 inch for'ard, as our old one had cracked her 'A' tube; took in all our war stores, including six months' provisions, and prepared to paint our white sides and yellow funnels black.

Even the six-inch guns, stored at Kowloon to arm the Canadian Pacific liners, in case of mobilisation, were overhauled and made ready for mounting. This scare lasted until 10th November, and the telegram announcing the withdrawal of Major Marchand did not cause half so much relief and pleasure as another telegram from the Admiralty—"*Orlando* and *Aurora* will probably commission at beginning of January to relieve *Immortalité* and *Narcissus*."

We had been in commission for three whole years, and three years is quite long enough for any ship, however "happy and chatty".

Ordered Home

We left Hong-Kong in the middle of January, 1899, after a week of farewell festivities, the gilt bladder at the end of our extra-long paying-off pendant leaping in our wake astern, and rolled our way down to Singapore, to await our relief.

Perhaps we were as sorry to say good-bye to our ward-room sampan crew at Hong-Kong as to anyone. The little Chinese woman, with her two small children and her handsome, first-mate, husband, had scarcely failed us, however hard it blew. We could be absolutely certain that at whatever hour of the night we came down to Murray Pier, stood in the light of the lamp at the end of it, and helped by the Sikh policeman, shouted out in the dark, "*Immortalité*, sampan!" very soon would come her shrill reply, "*Immortalite*", and presently a little corner of the lateen sail and a splash under the bows would show in the faint light of the lamp, and the little lady would bring her boat alongside the steps, steering with one chubby foot on the tiller. Down we would climb under the matting awning, in the stern, among the sleeping family, and be taken off safely to our ship.

We had a great regard for this cheery little soul who did her "marketing" in the forenoons, while her husband worked the sampan, and slept with one eye open, when, after the regular trips, she anchored off Murray Pier at night. She kept, too, a tight string on the family purse, and her husband did not often get a "run ashore" or a chance of wasting the family fortunes on samshui or at fantan.

On the way down to Singapore we paid a visit to Labuan, in Borneo. The Governor happened to be away in the interior, trying to "fix up" a very eminent outlaw, named Mat Salleh, and a slight difference of opinion among the local residents as to who represented him, during his absence, led to difficulties.

We played and won a cricket match against the Planters; defeated them on their rifle range, and met many queer characters, the queerest a faultlessly dressed, yellow-haired Englishman who resided in a glorified hut, built on piles in the usual manner, and with a red-painted galvanized roof. It looked a miserable shanty until we climbed up the ladder and entered the living room, which might have been brought, bodily, from Mayfair. The elegant tables were covered with photographs of the aristocratic and theatrical world, and strewn with the latest English, French and German novels. A grand piano occupied one corner of the room, and on the wooden walls, among other silk hangings, hung a Chinese "Pass for Safe Travel in China", consisting of two large hanging embroideries and a banner—a somewhat bulky and inconvenient "passport"! Two richly dressed Malay "boys" attended to our simple wants—a long drink—in that depressingly moist climate. They had, during the previous year, accompanied their master to England and paddled him, at Henley, in a Venetian gondola, without expressing the least interest or astonishment at any sight they saw there, or in London; and the pantomime *Aladdin*, to which they had been taken as a great treat, had bored them "stiff", because the plot "was such an old one."

We left Labuan feeling thankful that we had not to live there, and we sincerely pitied the five or six weary-looking ladies who were obliged to do so.

At Singapore we waited for another two months, and then, at last, started for England, arriving in the Channel and sighting the Eddystone exactly three years and a half since we had lost sight of it below the horizon.

Pay Off

We "paid off" the dear old ship and left her alongside at Chatham, looking very lonely and forlorn, with topmasts down, stripped of guns, boats and running rigging.

She had seen her last glimpse of the outside world, had leaped and plunged and rolled for the last time; never again would she dip her bows into a heavy sea, or shake herself—and us—as her screws raced and the cascades of white foam thundered on her fo'c'sle.

CHAPTER VI

1899-1900

Manœuvres in "Apollo"—The Boer War Ordered to the Cape—Sir Edward Chichester—Chief Transport Officer—The Manila Lady—Restlessness in Cape Squadron—The Black Week—Wounded from Graspan—A Wounded Marine—Appointed to Grant's Naval Brigade—Inspected by Lord Roberts—Port Elizabeth—Modder River—Chased by C.I.V. Sentry.

FOUR days after paying off the *Immortalité* and scattering to our homes, the Admiralty hauled us out again to commission ships for the manœuvres.

They sent me to the second-class cruiser *Apollo*. She had twenty sisters, and to recall correctly the names of all of them used to make an excellent memory test.

Commissioning a ship for manœuvres is really a thankless job for all concerned. No one takes any real interest in the ship herself, and the main thing, from the officers' point of view, is to induce a ward-room messman to come to sea for a month and make as much out of them as he can, with the least possible discomfort to their digestive organs. This particular commission lasted forty days, and the total mess-bills of eleven officers amounted to £135, including wine bills—rather a considerable sum considering the small pay we had in 1899, and that, of these eleven, not one had even a local reputation for inebriety.

Gathered in Torbay we found the Reserve Fleet. It included *Alexandra* (Flag), *Hercules*, *Agamemnon* and *Ajax*, *Devastation and Thunderer*, *Hero* and *Conqueror* (the Sea Boots), *Trafalgar* and *Nile*, *Benbow* and *Sanspareil.* The obsolete *Northampton* acted as mother ship for twenty destroyers.

These ships embodied the changing designs of very nearly thirty years of naval progress and made an interesting collection of antiques. No more than two ships were alike, and two still carried muzzle-loading guns—the *Alexandra* and *Hercules*—in broadside batteries. The muzzle-loading 13½-inch guns of the *Agamemnon*, *Ajax*, *Devastation* and *Thunderer* had been replaced by 10-inch breech-loaders; the *Hero* and *Conqueror* mounted 12-inch, the *Nile* and *Trafalgar* 13.5-inch, and the *Benbow* and *Sanspariel* 16.1-inch.

With all this motley array of different guns, differently disposed, efficient fleet gunnery was, of course, entirely out of the question, even if it had been seriously contemplated.

The oldest of the ships had been brought up-to-date (?) by the replacement of masts and yards with military masts, bristling with three-pounders in their fighting tops, and a sprinkling of 6-inch and 4.7-inch Q.F. guns wherever deck space permitted. Every one of them mounted machine-guns, chiefly five-barrelled Nordenfeldts, to drive off—I presume—steamboats attacking with outrigger torpedoes, or even boarding parties; and many of them still carried the ludicrous boarding-pikes to meet that desperate emergency.*

This Reserve Fleet, this collection of naval curiosities, had for years constituted the sea-power of

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*In the *Immortalité* " repel boarders " had been a great feature of our General Quarters exercises and as a last resort, to stave off capture, all the Chinese domestics would be rushed to the danger spot. It used to be a wonderful and awe inspiring sight to see Sui Chong, the fat and unpopular ward-room messman, panting along the battery deck clutching his unwieldy pike and trying to prevent his " makee learns " prodding him with theirs.

England until Lord Charles Beresford forced acceptance of his building programme.

We met some of the new battleships of his programme three days later, when the Atlantic Fleet joined company, and with them came some of the new big cruisers of the *Diadem* class, not quite accustomed to their Belleville boilers, and very liable to blot out the heavens with smoke when they pressed them.

That as many as fifty-five ships formed the combined fleet did not make these manœuvres memorable, but the fact that, for the first time, Jackson's adaptation of Marconi's wireless system was utilised by a fleet at sea to carry out a simple tactical exercise—the junction of a fleet with a convoy in the face of an intercepting force which only knew, approximately, the course of the convoy.

The *Alexandra*, *Argonaut* and *Juno* had been fitted with wireless—the *Juno* escorting the convoy—and I well remember the genuine feeling of elation when the *Alexandra* made a visual signal that she had gained communication with the convoy at a range of *fifty* miles!

The dullest imagination could visualise the enormous strategical and tactical possibilities of this invention, though few could foresee the marvellous advance which a few years would bring.

A great day this was for Commander Jackson and the *Vernon.*

While returning from this exercise, and steaming up Channel one night, in the middle watch, a sailing ship lost her head and tried to run through the fleet. The *Sanspareil* promptly sank her, but rescued the crew, including the Skipper's wife, dressed only in her nightgown. They put her into an officer's spare cabin, and by next morning a couple of bluejackets had made her quite a smart serge dress and all "etceteras," as far as the materials at their disposal and their knowledge of requirements enabled them.

We paid off the *Apollo* and I resumed my interrupted foreign service leave.

War now grew daily more probable in South Africa; on the 9th October, 25,000 men of the Army Reserve joined the colours, and two days later the Boer War actually commenced. I bombarded the medical department of the Admiralty with requests to be sent to the Cape, basing my claim on the knowledge of small-bore bullet wounds I had acquired at Manila; but, at that time, no one dreamed that sailors or marines would have to be landed from the ships out there, so I was politely "turned down" and sent, instead, to the Sheerness Gunnery School.

A Major of Sappers, ordered to the front, came into that Mess one morning to wish us good-bye. While there, news came of the battle of Elandslaagte, and he cursed his luck, thinking, as we all thought, that the War would be finished before he could reach the Cape.

Eleven days later came the disconcerting news of the loss of two battalions and a mountain battery outside Ladysmith, and we heard that a naval brigade with guns, from the *Powerful*, had been rushed up in the nick of time to that town.

Then naval reinforcements *had* to be sent to fill up the gaps, and the very next day, while I examined a draft of exuberantly cheerful men, detailed to go out from Sheerness, I received a signal to accompany them. On Wednesday, at mid-day, the joyful news came, and I had to embark on Saturday—two days and a half to get ready. In spite of the circumstances, the red-headed Commander of the *Wildfire* excelled his customary ingratiating and endearing manner before he, grudgingly, granted me leave.

Saturday saw me and my gear, including all the latest appliances for abdominal surgery, and some very hurriedly made khaki, on board the Union Castle *Briton*, with 350 bluejackets and marines, and the 2nd Somersets. On a horribly wet, cheerless evening we steamed out of Southampton, and an old gentleman, perched at the end of one of the dock "arms", gave us a farewell on his cornet. I can see him still, blowing vigorously in the rain and the wind, and I believe that the old sportsman "played out" every transport sailing from Southampton during the war.

Wishing "good-bye" is a painful affair at any time, more so if one is anticipating any fighting. So every one of us naval and marine officers, although we had our hasty war equipment stowed away in our tin cases, came down in plain clothes, protesting to our sorrowing relatives that we were only going out to fill up gaps in the ships and that there was no possibility of being "landed".

Every one of us except one—a naval lieutenant—who strolled up, at the psychological moment, garbed in the most correct and complete war gear that he could invent—and gave the "show" away.

We made him change, but it was too late, and our relatives left us with the most gloomy forebodings, because, at this time, the idea prevailed that the Boers were "dead" shots, and if one saw you it didn't matter a "tuppenny damn" whether you ran or stayed stock-still, he'd get you and get you every time with his *elephant* gun.

It is common enough for people going to the "front" to have a prognostication of death, but I have never seen the idea so firmly fixed in any man's mind as it was with the Doctor attached to the 2nd Somersets. Our duties threw us much together, and I knew him well, and that this foreboding was a definite obsession and not a pose. He did not even allow it to depress him. He held it, too, in spite of the fact that the battalion had been detailed for duty only on lines of communication.

I learnt afterwards that on disembarkation at Durban, the 2nd Somersets had been rushed up-country and that on the first occasion they came under fire he was the only casualty—mortally wounded.

Among the officers of this " Draft for the Cape of Good Hope Station " came Eric Back, a very efficient gunnery lieutenant, who later on did extremely fine work in independent charge of two twelve-pounders employed with mobile columns. He commanded H.M.S. *Natal* in the great war, and when that ship blew up in Cromarty harbour, the Navy lost a very able Captain. Three officers of Marines went out with us, of whom Captain R. H. Morgan (Tin-eyed Morgan)—a good left-hand bowler, one of the cheeriest of messmates, and the subaltern, Leslie Orme Wilson, replaced casualties after the battle of Graspan. The latter was wounded, and earned his D.S.O. outside Belfast.*

I fear that no one else among us had a chance of earning distinction in the war, or, if he had, took full advantage of the chance.

When the *Briton* arrived at Cape Town, my old Captain, Sir Edward Chichester—the Chief Transport Officer at the Cape—boarded her. He had installed his office in the Clock Tower, in the docks; and all through the war to this office came the masters of transports and storeships. Frequently they came boiling over with wrath because they could not discharge their troops or their stores, or could not get coal or water to enable them to hurry away again. However irate they entered that office, not one of them but left it cooing like a dove, with one of "Old Chich's" cigars in his mouth and one of "Old Chich's" strongest whiskies and sodas inside his waistcoat, thoroughly pleased with himself, perfectly satisfied that "Old Chich" would do his best for him —and his friend for life.

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*He is now Governor of Bombay.

My old Captain had hundreds of amusing experiences there during the war, and I must tell of one of them.

One morning while we lay off Manila in the *Immortalité*, Admiral Dewey had sent over to us a demure little lady who had managed to come down from Hong Kong in one of his supply ships. He wrote a letter to explain that the poor little soul's husband was somewhere in Manila, and "could Chichester get her ashore to search for him?" Along she came, and looked so lonely and forlorn, and pleaded so hard that she might go ashore and find her loving husband, that the Skipper wrote at once to the Governor-General. I expect that he added, "she's a damned pretty wench", or something like that. At any rate, off came the Governor's permission, and, sobbing her gratitude, off went the little lady.

Naturally we all took a great interest in her, and envied the luck of the husband with whom we saw her driving about the city afterwards; although we felt slightly puzzled when it seemed to us that he was not always the same man.

Rather more than eighteen months after this incident, a timid knock came at Sir Edward's clock-tower office door one morning, and in walked a heavily-veiled little woman with a tale of separation from a loving, beloved husband, stationed, she thought, somewhere at Nauwport or De Aar Junctions. "If she could only get permission to go—just as far as that—just to see that he was safe and well—and she would come back again, content—Oh! could it be managed?"

Something about her voice and figure recalled the Manila lady to the Skipper: " Um, my dear, I think I've heard that voice before, just you raise that veil of yours?"

She raised it, timidly, with her lovely eyes bedewed with tears—and she *was* the same pathetic little lady

"Um! My dear, you can't try on your games with 'Old Chich'," he growled. "You made a fool of 'Old Chich' once, but nobody makes a fool of him a second time, ugh!"—and the lady did *not* go in search of her elusive "husband".

To return to the yarn, the situation in South Africa, when we arrived in Cape Town, caused extraordinary anxiety, and the military authorities thanked Heaven for the 2nd Somersets. We thought that they would want the 350 of us marines and sailors; probably they did, but as soon as we had entrained to Simon's Town—the headquarters of the Cape Squadron—our spirits fell to zero on being detailed to the *Doris* (flag) and *Monarch* (guardship).

The 2nd Somersets and ourselves had actually been the forerunners of the Army Corps hastening to South Africa; every man Jack appeared to be wanted very urgently, and we joined the thousand odd able-bodied fighting men in the ships at Simon's Town, and carried out peace routine. Not quite peace routine because, twice a week, every officer and man had to march up Red Hill, to the back of Simonsberg, and practice storming kopjes, loaded down with heavy marching gear, sweating horribly in the great heat, but happy even to be doing this.

Boer commandoes were pressing through Cape Colony, gathering adherents as they rode; over in Natal they boasted that they would be in Durban before Christmas; Ladysmith, Mafeking and Kimberley had been completely invested without the slightest prospect of relief until the new Army Corps arrived; English prestige had fallen hideously, but had not yet reached its lowest limit—and we, down in Simon's Bay, scrubbed hammocks and gave the usual shore leave. The feeling of irritation at our inaction became intense, and the desire to be "up and doing"—anything rather than stay on board ship—became so deep seated that I believe that every single officer or man in that Squadron would willingly have sacrificed his life to prove his manhood.

Graspan (or Enslin), 25th November, mitigated our depression slightly, because a naval brigade from the *Doris* and *Powerful*, accompanying Lord Methuen's Kimberley Relief Force, had led the attack and lost heavily. We all felt that in giving up their lives, with rifles in their hands, these of our dead had redeemed our own inaction.

Seventy marines and bluejackets left joyfully to fill vacancies and then at last all available khaki military uniform was served out to officers and men. Those who could get none dyed their white frocks, trousers and cap covers with permanganate of potash. What a mess they made of them, too!

Four days later an ambulance-train brought our wounded—three officers and fifty-seven men—to Simon's Town, and from that date until I myself left for the front, I assisted Fleet Surgeon Richardson and Surgeon Penny at the old Naval Hospital. Penny had had experience of military surgery in China some years before; mine, gained at Manila, helped me much, but neither of us could fail still to marvel at the little damage the Mauser bullets effected, the small amount of "stopping" power they had, and the extraordinary rapidity with which wounds healed. Most of our wounded were well in ten days.

Among them came the Flag Captain, R. C. Prothero, a very fine type of leader, with a main vein torn in his right arm and lucky to be alive. The Commander, A. P. Ethelston, had been killed, and from the loss of these two efficient officers that Naval Brigade never recovered.

As an instance of the little effect Mauser bullets could cause, one of the wounded marines had been shot clean through the lower part of the abdomen and had had no resulting symptoms. He told me that he had sat down on a rock at the top of Graspan Hill, after its capture, to get his breath and heard a bullet strike a stone.

"I sung out to the Cap'n,* 'They Bo-ers are a firing again, sir!' An' he turns round and looks at me an' 'e says, 'Ain't you been 'it? You're as white as a bleeding sheet!' an' I feels about an', Lor' bless you, sir, I 'ad—an' 'e says to me, 'Well, you'd jolly well better lie down, the Fleet Surgeon's a'comin' up the 'ill'—an' I did, an' Dr. Porter† 'e comed along in a minute or two, an' 'as me carried back, feelin' a fool—an' 'ere I be now, sir!"

We sent him to duty in a few days.

10th December, 11th December and 15th December, 1899—Maggersfontein, Stormberg and Colenso! Methuen had failed, Gatacre had failed, Buller himself had failed—had failed more than the others.

That week is still "Black Week" in South Africa, and the remembrance of it among the English living there, then, and still alive, still causes a catch in the breath. At the time depression became almost desperate—and the prestige of an Englishman and of the British Nation did then reach its nadir.

On shore the niggers became arrogant and offensive, walking ostentatiously on the pavements; they believed, as did the majority of the Dutch, that the English would soon be driven out of South Africa; the Dutch themselves were suspicious of each other; already brothers were fighting on both sides; even in the *Doris*, a lieutenant—a South African—had a brother fighting in De Wet's commando. We were not allowed to talk of the war or politics in the train or in the Clubs at Cape Town; and there were we—a thousand and more officers and men—in Simon's Bay, eating our hearts out to do something—anything to avenge the humiliation.

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* Captain A. E. Marchant, promoted to Major after the action and the first officer of Royal Marines to command a Naval Brigade in the field.

† Fleet Surgeon J. Porter, afterwards Surgeon Vice-Admiral Sir James Porter, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.

I do not pretend that we had any justification for blaming the Commander-in-Chief, who merely obeyed orders from England, but the bitterness of inaction caused our feelings to explode—illogically doubtless—certainly improperly. "For God's sake, sir, let us help; let us do something," was the single thought of all.

A week later Lord Roberts and Kitchener left England, and when they landed on the 10th January, 1900, at Cape Town, we all felt that at last order and system would be evolved out of chaos and indecision.

They asked, almost immediately, for more naval guns, and the railway workshops at Salt River quickly turned out improved field carriages for two more 4.7-inch. By the 27th January they were ready with their guns, and Lord Roberts himself came down to Simon's Town Dockyard to see them fired.

Commander Lowther Grant had been given command of them, and I went as surgeon.

Lord Roberts inspected us and the guns' crews, and spoke to each officer. He had lost his only son at Colenso, only six weeks before, and I think that I have rarely seen such sadness in any man's face as in his that day. He and I were about the same height and our eyes were on a level—how desperately sad his were.

We and our guns left Simon's Town in the *Harlech Castle* two days later, in the evening, just as the Commander-in-Chief, in his steamboat, returned from catching his thousand and first or thousand and second Cape salmon. No other Commander-in-Chief ever caught as many as he did.

We landed our guns at Port Elizabeth, and our little brigade, joined by Lieut. J. A. Fergusson and twenty-five men of the *Barrosa*, left at midnight by train in company with a battery of horse-artillery. Stormberg and General French had been our expected destination, but at Nauwport junction our train was side-tracked, and all that night long trains with blinds drawn and not a light showing in the carriages ran through from west to north and east and from north and east to west. Not a single one stopped or slowed down; they came out of the darkness, roared through the bleak station and disappeared into the darkness again.

"Concentrating the new Army Corps for the great advance," we thought, and kept ourselves warm with the realisation that at last a master hand had taken the ropes. By midnight we imagined that Colesberg or Stormberg were the places selected; by three in the morning we thought that perhaps it was at De Aar; by daylight we felt as muddled as the railway officials. Thank goodness Kitchener *had* been able to muddle them, as undoubtedly disloyal members of the railway staff had communicated to the enemy. We heard afterwards that this continual movement of troop-trains, backwards and forwards all night long, did actually achieve its object of mystifying the enemy as to our eventual line of advance, and kept Cronje in his isolated position at Maggersfontein too long for him to fall back successfully on Bloemfontein.

Eventually our train left westwards, and twenty-four hours later, at break of day, we ran over the temporary bridge across the Modder River and heard the guns of the original naval brigade—the one which had fought at Graspan as infantry—fire their morning salvo at Boer watering-parties along the foot of the Maggersfontein Ridge. As we ran through the camp of the Highland Brigade, the men came pouring out of their tents, cheering and hooraying; not in honour of us, as we thought at first, but because they had just heard of Hector Macdonald's arrival to fill Wauchope's place (killed six weeks before).

Grant's Brigade—as we were called—rigged its nine tents and stayed on the banks of the Riet River for five days. On each afternoon suffocating sand-storms and sand "devils" swept through the camp, and made the great and unaccustomed heat almost unbearable. The sand penetrated everything, and as the "devils"—like waterspouts at sea—swept across the open latrines, their lighter contents would be swirled aloft and distributed over the camp; what a chance the microbes had! and took! Until we learnt only to drink at meals, and then sparingly, and to wear thick flannel shirts all day long, we felt anything but happy.

Five days later we entrained for Enslin, and pitched our camp by the side of the railway and not far from Graspan kopje. Here we received our transport—twelve Cape-wagons for ammunition, one as an officer's mess and ambulance, two water-carts and 284 oxen, with four colonial conductors and forty-two natives, of every tribe in South Africa, I should imagine.

On Sunday, 11th February, the advance across the veldt to Bloemfontein commenced, and with the leading brigades went two 12-pounder naval guns of the main naval brigade under Lieut.-Commander W. J. Colquhoun of the Royal Victorian Navy—a magnificent officer. They expected hard fighting, so Fleet-Surgeon Porter, the P.M.O. of this naval brigade, instead of detailing a junior officer, had ridden down the fifteen miles to Enslin to accompany them himself. He sent to me, in the middle of the night, to borrow a hypodermic case and, like a fool, I started off from our little camp without knowing the password for the night. I crossed the railway and then, in the full moonlight, almost ran into the arms of a C.I.V. sentry, close to a ganger's hut. The C.I.V.'s had only just come "up country", and this one lost his head. I lost mine and he started to chase me round and round that ganger's hut, jabbing at me with his bayonet and yelling "Halt! Who goes there? Halt! Who goes there?" while, with what breath I had, I yelled "Guard! turn out!" or something like that, for I could see his pals lying asleep and could think of nothing else. We ran round that hut so fast that I am certain an unbiased spectator would not have known which was chasing the other. At any rate the guard—or whatever it was—did get in between me and his beastly bayonet, calmed him down, and I proceeded on my way much "shaken", but not before I had learnt the password.

On Monday, 12th February, we prepared for the great advance, loaded our wagons with ammunition, packed the little kit we were allowed, closed the flaps of our nine tents, hauled down the white ensign we had hoisted on a telegraph pole, and crossed the railway to bivouac under Enslin kopje—our first night in the open.

CHAPTER VII

1900

The Great Advance—Invade Orange Free State—Ram Dam—Horses Brought by Ashton—De Wet Captures Main Supply Column—Jacobsdal—Night Marches—Oxen Exhausted—The Four Vultures—Paardeberg—Open Fire—Scarcity of Food and Fodder—Thunderstorms—Our First Pom-Pom—Surrender of Cronje—The Laager—Capture seven Ladies—Tend Boer Wounded—Looting.

THIS is the description of our actual start as I wrote of it in *Naval Brigades in the South African War.*

Up and ready by 4 a.m., we waited while the Highland Brigade swung by. After them came the 82nd Battery, followed by a 5-inch howitzer battery, with their short, stumpy guns, rumbling past with a clatter of wheels and stamping of hoofs, we looking curiously at them and they still more curiously at us, for this was our first meeting, and we were destined to march together a good many weary miles. Now came the turn of the Naval Guns, and they quickly brought up the rear. First went " Little Bobs ", the *Doris* gun, with horse-shoes nailed on her carriage for luck, and the muzzle of her long chase pointing over the backs of the two " wheeler " oxen. After her came " Sloper", with a crew of *Barrosas*, giving place to " Little Bobs", for she was a flagship gun, with a flagship crew, so must go first. Close behind were two ammunition wagons and a water cart; then came the officers' conspicuous hooded ambulance and head-quarter wagon, whilst the remaining wagons and the second water cart formed the rest of this patriarchal procession.

From the very start we experienced trouble with our gun "teams". Oxen are accustomed to work in a span of sixteen-eight pairs—and the trek-chains are sufficiently strong. Each of our guns, however, required thirty-two oxen to haul them along the soft, powdered surface of the veldt tracks, and the same size of chain was not strong enough to take any sudden jerk of the two spans. Two spans being unaccustomed to work together, the difficulty of starting or of pulling the gun through a soft patch frequently resulted in a broken link, and delay while repairs were made with stout wire.

For the previous week I had been laid low with the prevailing "Modders", and the nine miles we marched that hot day were the longest I have ever walked; I could scracely crawl into Ram Dam, and lay for hours under the wagon, alongside our plump Gunner, Mr. Cannon, with a leaking water-bag dripping on us, both of us absolutely exhausted. However, when the sun went down I bathed in the cool, liquid mud of the dam, no leeches stuck to me, as they did to many, and before we started off again I had a horse.

That evening, Major G. G. Aston, R.M.L.I.,* attached to the staff for intelligence duties, cantered up to our wagon, leading three horses, one for Grant, the Commander, one for his midshipman "A.D.C." and the third for me. He had found them, with all their gear, in a horse truck at Enslin, labelled "Grant's Naval Brigade", knew that we should never get them, and had the extraordinary kindness to bring them to us himself, riding back again after a scanty supper. I have blessed him for that act ever since.

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*Major-General Sir George Aston, K.C.B., R.M.

Attached to Colville's 9th Division, we marched (thank goodness I rode), fifteen miles next day to Waterval Drift where, all day long, ox-wagon supply columns crawled interminably into the plain—three hundred or more wagons, the main supply-column of the whole army of advance.

De Wet captured them—everyone of them—the next night, directly the 9th Division had gone too far away to prevent him. We, with the main ammunition column, left them at 1 a.m., in brilliant moonlight, for Wegdrai Drift and knew that something had happened because our two escorting battalions had been sent back hastily. Scouts came in frequently to report Boers on our right flank, and, unprotected as we now were, the guns had to be hurried forward out of danger as fast as the oxen could haul them. In the middle of one of these scares, when we momentarily expected to see a commandor dashing towards us, I had hitched "Mazeppa"—my peerless steed—to the rear of our ambulance wagon, in order to fix on my red-cross arm-badge. He stumbled, jerked himself loose, and dashed away across the veldt with my water-bottle, brandy-flask and first-aid haversack strapped to his saddle. I had only possessed him for two days and now to lose him and the "gear" was indeed an unkind fate. I dashed after him, shouting the most endearing appeals to return, but he had not known me long enough to really love his master's voice, and my pleadings were in vain. A sadder and a wiser man, I regained the guns and tramped along sadly until suddenly back he came, tired of the loneliness of the veldt, and made for the ammunition-wagon on top of which was stowed his morning's hay ration. This pathetic little story should conclude with his neighing a welcome and licking my face when I went to secure him; he didn't; he trod very heavily on my foot.

Jacobsdal

By the time we reached Waterval Drift, our guns had been hauled twenty-seven miles in eleven marching hours during the preceding twenty-four. When it is remembered that each gun, carriage and limber, weighed more than five tons and that the march had been across open veldt, this was a great achievement for "guns of position"—the technical term applied to them. I believe that Army Manuals—in those days—allowed five miles as the daily rate of advance to be expected of "guns of position", and that along roads.

From Waterval Drift we watched two horse-artillery batteries, and the City Imperial Volunteers (their first baptism of fire) turn a couple of hundred Boers out of the dorp of Jacobsdal. The batteries gave chase, alternately shelling the galloping Boers, limbering up, dashing past and firing again. The Boers, crouching down over the necks of their ponies, quickly disappeared over a ridge, apparently unscathed; but this, our first view of the enemy, made an extremely picturesque episode.

I walked into Jacobsdal to buy anything obtainable for the "mess" but found the food shops practically empty. In one, however, I discovered a large box of tartaric acid and another of bicarbonate of soda, put them on the backs of two niggers and brought them to our wagons in triumph. Already we had found that our daily ration of rum, mixed with tepid, muddy water made anything but a pleasant drink. Now, with my purchases, we made a most excellent "fizzy drink", and later on, at Paardeberg, the fame of the "Naval Cocktail" became known and officers of units near by used to come along to have their rum "fizzed".

By this time, French had swept round Cronje's left at Maggersfontein, relieved Kimberley and convinced that obstinate old Boer that his position was now quite untenable. He had been firmly convinced that the English army would never advance except along the railway line, across which he was sitting, and even now he had plenty of time to fall back on Bloemfontein if only he had abandoned his ox-transport and guns. This he would not do, and suffered the inevitable result of his pig-headed stupidity.

If aeroplanes had existed, the view from one on this day would have been most interesting—Cronje's patriarchial procession of ox-wagons crawling along towards Paardeberg Drift—French's cavalry, on their dropping horses, converging on his left flank—the advance brigades of our army struggling along, day and night, on the other flank—all three striving to reach that vital Drift first. Even at Jacobsdal the loss of our main supply column made itself felt—only half-rations of biscuits and three-quarters of tea and coffee being issued by the A.S.C. There *were* three cases of jam remaining, but the North Staffords annexed two and our very energetic commissariat midshipman, Lang, wheedled the last from the worried A.S.C. Sergeant—also the very last ration of rum to be had.

As a matter of fact, the Army always treated us as their guests throughout the war, and if there was any little luxury " going " the Naval Brigade always had first " help ".

Here at Jacobsdal the main Naval Brigade which had fought at Belmont, Graspan, and Maggersfontein joined us. Their 4.7's were shackled to the rear of wagons, and towed stern-first, ignominiously. I am afraid that their appearance on the scene did not cause us much pleasure, for our little " brigade " had so far been " on its own ", and independence is always sweet.

We marched another nine miles that night, to

Klip Vaal Drift, along a track across the veldt already worn to powder. Once on the move, the dust cloud quickly obscured the moon, blotted out those in front and behind, and filled our nostrils and eyes. Halts had to be called at frequent intervals, and during these the dust cloud blew away and revealed the huge convoy, in the brilliant moonlight, with the motionless teams of horses, mules and oxen, the guns, the white tilts of the wagons, and the dark figures of the men sleeping on the ground. The silence, almost ghostly in its intensity, would only be broken by the screaming of some poor mule in the agony of sand-colic, or the jangling of a trek-chain as one of our oxen sank to the ground.

In the morning we halted at Klip Kraal Drift, and while we were seated round our stretcher breakfast-table, up cantered Lord Roberts and his staff. As we leapt to our feet, he sang out cheerily, " Naval Brigade! I want you to push on another ten miles; I have Cronje surrounded and want to give you a show".

Unfortunately, however willing, we could not do so, on account of the oxen, and had to watch the infantry gaily marching off ahead of us.

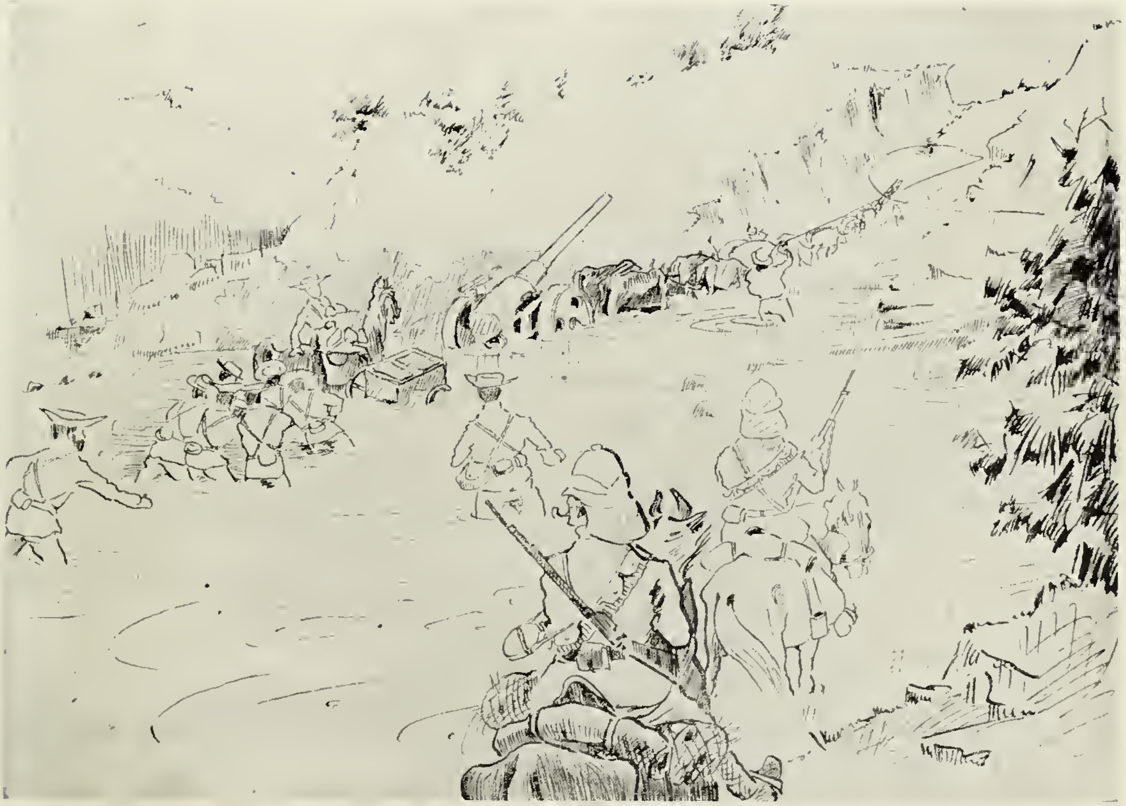
We shoved off eventually with the main ammunition-column, and marched through the heat of a very long day with our left protected by the Modder River and the right of this three miles of guns and ammunition wagons by Captain " Tin Eye " Morgan and some ninety-odd, footsore marines. We actually advanced twenty-seven miles in twenty-two hours, but our poor devils of oxen suffered greatly. These animals cannot be worked hard, both night and day, and it was pitiful to see them at the end of this march.

I rode out to the Marines during the afternoon, to escape the discomfort of the hot dust raised by the column, and found Morgan much worried because parties of Boers had been reported hovering near, and his men were—by this time—physically incapable of scrambling up the small kopjes on the right front of the column; they could only painfully keep abreast it. He cast an eager glance at "Mazeppa" as I rode up and suggested that I should do this job. Nothing loth, off I went, looked over the tops of some of the kopjes and reported "all clear", but then, just as I neared the top of another, I saw four heads dodge down behind some rocks and guessed that I was "for it"—four Boers—four elephant guns, four huge bullet holes—and no flowers—by request or not. In this awful emergency, it flashed across my mind that a ship, turning on its wake, makes an almost stationary target, so breathing a prayer in Mazeppa's ears and prodding his bony flanks, I urged him, at what he considered a hard gallop, past those rocks. As he clattered by, up came those four heads, up came four pairs of wings, and away flew four great vultures!

I returned to Morgan and pointed out to him that a doctor undertaking scouting duties infringed the Geneva Convention; at any rate a conscientious doctor must preserve himself from mental strain for the time when he should be professionally required. He wanted to know if the Geneva Convention would be heart-broken if he used the doctor's horse, and I had to confess that the point was a moot one, and that, at any rate, he might try the experiment—which he did.

Later on that afternoon I tried to lend Mazeppa to Fergusson,* the *Barrosa* lieutenant, the second-in-command of our two guns. I found him staggering along through the sandy dust in front of "Sloper's" ox-team, looking absolutely exhausted; but nothing

*Now Vice-Admiral Sir James A. Fergusson, K.C.M.G., C.B.



"SLOPER" 4.7-IN.
Crossing the Drift below Paardeberg Laager.

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would make him ride, either that day or at any time, while his gun's crew had to walk.

It was on this day that Kitchener made his impetuous assaults on Cronje's laager; perhaps if our guns could have been brought up in time the result might have been achieved at less cost.

We did reach Paardeberg next day, and as our lyddite shells were much needed we made quite a royal progress through the camp, plunged-up to our saddles—over the backs of the oxen—men hanging on to limbers—across a very unpleasant "drift" at a bend in the Modder below the laager, and hauled our guns up a small kopje, 2,500 yards from a line of trenches which the Boers were digging, feverishly, on the plains at our feet, and from a confused, huddled, mass of wagons crowded on the *wrong* side of Paardeberg Drift. From one corner of the Laager a pom-pom kept on firing spasmodic bursts—1.2.3.4.5—1.2.3.4.5—at anything which attracted its fancy, at anything and everything except at our guns, although these made a prominent enough target. Not even when we began to plump our lyddite shells among their wagons did either this gun, or three Krupp guns they had there, deign to take the least notice of us. Our annoyance at this surly behaviour was really genuine, and the men took very little interest in the routine work of the next seven days—destroying wagons, oxen and horses in the laager and preventing the Boer guns irritating troops, guns or convoys in the open. They did, however, snipe us with great regularity whenever the tricky light made accurate shooting possible. Through our ships telescopes, on their tripods, we could almost recognise the features of any Boers walking about the laager, and one nice, old, bearded burgher, and his two sons, used to crawl out of the trenches towards us every evening, take cover behind a dead horse and snipe us for an hour. They made quite a hobby of this, and deserved success even though they attained nothing more than one or two hits on our steel guns' wheels, five feet in diameter and with rims a foot wide.

Food—water—thunderstorms at night—those were our chief troubles at Paardeberg. Fresh convoys had had to be gathered to take the place of the huge convoy which De Wet had captured, and the first of these only arrived the day before Cronje surrendered.

Until then the Army had to be content with less than half biscuit ration and trek-ox—trek-ox so hard and undigestible that we, in the Naval Brigade, had to mince it, and make a thick soup or stew. With all our wagons we had opportunities of picking up, and carrying along with us, any firewood we found—such as empty commissariat boxes; the infantry could not do this, and, poor fellows, their ration of trek-ox didn't do them much good. I often saw them trying to heat a slab of it, in their canteen lid, over a few burning twigs.

For drinking water our only source was the river, below the laager. Always thick and muddy at this time of the year, it now contained the refuse of the Boer laager and bore a constant succession of dead oxen and dead horses. We boiled this water and added alum, but it was always disgusting.

I had had made some iron tripods, lightly hinged at the top, with a chain and hook for kettles and hooks on the "legs" for small "billies". These proved very useful, as tripods, when fuel was abundant, but still more useful to lay across a hole, as a grating, when fuel was scarce. I had also brought along several very large, square canvas water-bags designed so that the whole of the upper edge could be opened and the bag everted, cleaned and dried.

They were a great improvement on the ordinary bag, which rapidly became choked with mud and could not be cleaned. The four stokers in our little "brigade" had nothing else to do but boil water, clean and fill these bags. As this took all their time during the halts, they were allowed to ride in the wagons when on trek.

Our natives—Kaffirs, Basutos and Hottentots—suffered much more severely than we did. At this time they had nothing issued to them but a small amount of flour, but they did not grumble, and maintained their cheerfulness even when extremely hungry. Down behind our wagons the oxen luxuriated in plenty, and most of them regained condition rapidly. The unfortunate army horses, were, however, in dire want; they could not eat veldt grass, and oats and hay were almost unprocurable. A couple of field and howitzer-batteries used to water their horses daily at a small dam just below our guns, and of the gaunt skeletons which used to be led there, generally one or two had not the strength to pull themselves out of the mud when they had quenched their thirst; it was a most pitiful sight.

Of the interesting people we met during this investment of the laager, I can now only remember General Smith-Dorien, commanding the Light Infantry Brigade, in front of our guns, Hector Macdonald, riding about with his wounded foot in a bandage, Bennet Burleigh, fat, jovial and athirst for news, Captain Seymour Fortescue, R.N., the latter somewhat puzzled to find himself out there on Lord Roberts' staff, but brimming over with yarns which made several long evenings, under our stolen tarpaulin, pass quickly, and Colonel Remington of the Tiger Scouts, desperately keen to prove that his men might not all be angels, but that their loyalty could not be questioned.

The nightly thunderstorms were somewhat alarming when, as frequently happened, the lightning struck the top of the kopje round us. Men had been killed when under wagons, so on "turning in" we used to make sure that however restless we were in our sleep we could not roll up against the iron tyres of the wheels; but we often wondered, as we lay under a wagon loaded with lyddite shells, what would happen if it did get in the way of one of those blinding, rending flashes. The scientific assured us that nothing would happen, and we had to leave it at that—not exactly convinced.

On the day before Cronje surrendered, the first English pom-pom (1lb. Maxim) arrived in camp, and was fired at a party of trench diggers.

Quite a crowd of experts assembled to watch, and at the very first "burst" of firing, those Boers disappeared for thirteen minutes—I timed them—and then bolted back below the river banks. Previously they had never taken cover for more than five minutes when we fired a lyddite shell or shrapnel at them, and then resumed their digging. I imagine that the flash of the guns and the noise of the shells coming along, gave them ample time to take cover, and that the pom-pom shells arrived without warning.

Four army 6-inch howitzers also arrived on that day, and occasionally fired salvoes into the laager; the psychological effect of their tremendous detonations probably was the deciding factor which induced Cronje to surrender next morning. At any rate, the Canadians made the final advance along the river banks that night, and worked their way so close to the laager that, at day-break, white sheets were hung up as a token of surrender—by a strange and happy coincidence on the anniversary of Majuba.

We heard cheering, ran up to our guns and saw the Boers streaming out from the Laager in two long lines, throwing their rifles to left and right of them in two heaps.

Surgeon Beadnell, of the Main Naval Brigade, accompanied Gilbert Stairs, the Canadian Officer who actually received Cronje's surrender, and was the first doctor to enter the Laager. I was, I believe the second, obtaining permission from General Smith-Dorien, and telling the stoker stretcher-bearers to follow me. The wounded lay in tunnelled dug-outs on the steep river banks. Nearly all of them had been wounded ten days previously, on the day Kitchener attacked, and their wounds had suppurated. One very fine-looking old man had had his thigh smashed by a bullet or shrapnel and was in a desperate condition. I did what I could, temporarily, for him, and as my professional "fee" decided to annex a Colt target-model revolver which hung from a peg in the wall of the dug-out. But before I had finished, the little light that came in through the tunnel was obscured and, looking round, there was Beadnell.

"All right, old chap, I don't want any help; get on with the good work," I called to him, and off he went, but not before his long arm shot out and that coveted revolver disappeared with him. I then and there decided that on the next occasion I would make sure of my "fee" first.

In my further search for wounded I came across a party of weeping women and children—two very old ladies, two middle-aged and three children. Fortunately I had plenty of slabs of chocolate in my haversack and stopped the children's tears, but had not the least idea what to do with my prisoners-of-war—I had had no previous experience—for they were absolutely helpless and looked upon me as their guardian angel; in fact, I could not think of any means of getting rid of them except by pushing them over the edge of the bank into the river. So I took them across to where the wrecks of the wagons lay and fortunately ran into Lord Roberts and his Staff, who looked somewhat amused when I joyously presented my lady friends and explained that I had captured them single-handed. However, we found a horse with four legs—there were very few of them left—and a Cape buggy with two wheels; found some harness; fitted the horse to the buggy—crowded the whole family circle into it; Lord Roberts himself signed a pass for them—and away they went. I often have wondered what became of them.

The laager presented the most extraordinary appearance, the open ground dotted with shallow shell holes—five to six feet across—the sides splashed yellow and with generally a strip of shell lying in the bottom of them. It was very evident that the lyddite had not always detonated on the soft ground.

Nearly all the horses still alive had a leg broken or were so injured that they had to be destroyed, and many were coloured yellow, on one side, by the picric acid splashes. But the most weird and gruesome sight of all was the mangled pieces of horse and oxen blown up into the trees along the bank and now festooning their branches.

As for the wagons, there was scarcely a whole one left in the laager. The stench, too, was appalling.

And that pom-pom! It had not fired for the past two days and I soon found why—it had a large hole in its water-jacket. Now this hole must have been made by a shrapnel bullet from our naval guns; it was quite clean cut and much too large to have been made by a field gun shrapnel, yet the Gunners, bless their souls, presented it to Lord Roberts as their trophy!

By this time the army doctors had taken entire charge, so, with nothing more to do, I started looting. The faithful stokers, also leading Mazeppa, had joined me, so I filled their stretchers with a choice variety of loot and sent them back to the guns by devious routes to avoid "capture". Mazeppa and I wandered across to those two great heaps of rifles and I carefully selected for myself a sporting mauser and a carbine. However, a sentry pointed out, courteously but firmly, "'Ere! the Provo' Marshal, 'e won't 'ave none of that, 'e won't; cawn't be done, sir."

I thanked him for his kindly counsel and while we chatted amicably of the war and the prospects of more food I—who had been waiting for this—caught sight of a wicked officer examining that other great heap of rifles, perhaps thirty yards away, evidently with criminal intent. I called my friend's attention to this wretched fellow, bent on disobeying the Provost Martial's orders, and he gratefully dashed across in time to save him from deadly sin, but could not get back in time before I and my two rifles and Mazeppa were bounding gracefully out of reach. I don't know to this day how I mounted him on this occasion, for he stood sixteen hands—and I didn't.

That laager provided us with two ponies, harness, a wooden mess-table, basins, a mincing machine and even a tent. Some of the men's messes had well fitted luncheon baskets, most of them had plenty of rugs. As for the native "boys", they went in half-naked and came out in European clothes, complete to collars and ties. Three little chicken—tiny balls of yellow fluff—had been found by the bluejackets, motherless, so they too joined the Navy and went with us to Bloemfontein, being stowed in a kettle on the march, and chirping round the messes for food when we halted.

Two days after the surrender of the laager, the army marched five miles to the east, to get near a better water supply, and get far from the appalling stench of dead animals.

On this occasion I was captured by a patrol, pulled off my horse and accused of being a Boer spy. I had been sent out, in the heavy rain, to find the particular water-supply allotted to us and wandering too far afield, encountered this patrol. They had every excuse, because I presented a most unpleasing appearance in a bluejacket's straw hat, minus the ribbon and nearly minus the crown which flapped away from the brim, a stubbly black, yellow, red beard and moustache and a disgracefully green old macintosh covering me and as much of Mazeppa as it could.

I deserved to be shot, anyway, for being so disreputable, but they let me off after I had made some half-hearted protests.

As a matter of fact, neither the officers nor the men of the various naval brigades took sufficient trouble to be smart. With a somewhat peculiar psychology, they all rather gloried in looking unkempt; the men imagined that this made them look more like real soldiers. Our only "star turn" was the Paymaster,* who could always be relied upon to look properly turned out—he and his pony—at any hour of the day or night, in camp or on the march, and it was somewhat strange that so few officers made any considerable effort to follow his example.

The fact that we were removed—generally hurriedly—from our accustomed ship environment and placed in strange surroundings, with incomplete and badly-fitting make-shift uniforms, no doubt accounted for this, but we had to learn by experience—and not all did so learn—that to shave once a day was always possible, and that the stimulating mental effect of being clean and of having a smooth chin, was worth all the trouble involved and the denying oneself the few teaspoonfuls of water required.

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*Now Paymaster Rear-Admiral B. C. Allen, C.B., M.V.O.

The bluejackets and the naval officers (not the marines) wore ordinary seamen's straw hats, painted khaki colour, with the ribbons of their own ships round them; but their ribbons were soon lost, and as the hats were not capable of standing hard wear, the brims lost their shape and soon parted company with the crowns. In fact, they looked untidy long before they came to pieces, and although the brims did give some protection from the sun to the eyes and the back of the neck, the crowns touched the top of the head and gave little, if any, to that.

Later on, we had soft Colonial wide brimmed felt hats served out, and these were much more serviceable. The bluejackets embroidered a "foul" anchor, and the marines a "bugle" on the looped up brim, and eventually these badges became the only marks which distinguished our uniforms from those of the army.

CHAPTER VIII

1900

Poplar Grove—Mr. Ball and Mr. Cannon—An Unlucky Shot—Lord Roberts and Kitchener Direct a Full-dress Battle—Marching—Sufferings of Troops and Animals—Bloemfontein—Inspected by Lord Roberts—Cricket Match—The Club—Enteric—The Convent—My Lost Pyjamas—A Stern Army Reserve Sister—Rejoin Guns—Thaba Nju—Recalled to Simon's Town—"Doris"—A Very Secret Expedition—Return to England—Mafeking Heroines—Roger Casement.

For a week after Paardeberg the army waited to get up enough scanty food supplies for the seventy mile advance to Bloemfontein and the railway. This pause—a result of De Wet's capture of that big supply column—was utilised by Presidents Kruger and Steyn to gather every available man to defend a line, some eight miles long, astride the Modder. From our bivouac we could see them mounting guns on a high kopje in their centre and hoped that, at last, "Sloper" and "Little Bobs" would be called upon in earnest.

We worked all one day and most of the night making a path up the rear of a kopje 7,000 yards from these Boer guns, and hauled our guns up it, just below the crest, ready to run them forward at day-break and open fire. I remember that night because our men did prodigious work rolling away boulders and filling up holes to make that track and because I was much worried with a severe case of sunstroke. When all was finished we had some supper and our two Warrant Officers, Mr. Ball and Mr. Cannon—a strange coincidence of names—commenced a very heated argument about the respective accuracy of their two guns. Mr. Ball insisted that Mr. Cannon's gun, "Little Bobs", had strained her carriage at Paardeberg and threw several yards to the right even at that short range; he suggested, that as we were to fire at a range of 7,000 yards in the morning, Mr. Cannon should make the necessary deflection on his sights—"if he really wanted to get near his target."

Mr. Cannon, red in the face, denied the fact obstinately, although we all knew that he was wrong, but left them to settle the difference between them. At 3 a.m. when we were turned out, these two were still hard "at it", and at 4 a.m. we ran our guns up to the sky line expecting to be warmly greeted—and nothing happened.

Disappointment number one.

From the top of this kopje we had a magnificent panorama of the whole Boer position, with its kopjes connected by lines of trenches, in the plain between, and with its left resting on seven little "Ant Hill" kopjes. On the forward slope of our own kopje the Guards brigade awaited the order to deploy and advance on the Boer centre; and on the rear slope, behind our wagons, gathered some thousand mounted-infantry. Over across the Modder, the Highland Brigade and two naval 12-pounders were already busily engaged with some guns on the Boer right and away, far away to *our* right, a huge dark, slowly moving mass was General French and the whole of his available cavalry and guns.

We felt the keenest delight in the anticipation of taking part in what appeared to be a first-class battle, and when the sappers ran their telephone lines up to the top of our kopje and Lord Roberts and Kitchener both came along, we realised that we should now see how a battle was "run".

At six o'clock one of the other 4.7's on the shoulder of the kopje fired what we called the "starting gun" at the Boer gun-positions on One Tree Hill. The shell burst close beneath it, but no reply came and we realised that they had withdrawn their guns during the night.

Disappointment number two.

Then, directed by the Field Marshal himself, " Little Bobs " and " Sloper " fired two lyddite shell at the Ant Hill Kopjes, with the intention, we presumed, of keeping the Boer left flank in their trenches until French could get round them. Mr. Ball's shell burst half-way up his target, but Mr. Cannon's " Little Bobs ", carrying much to the right, sent her shell *between* two of the little kopjes and we saw it burst well behind them. It burst, we afterwards heard, right among the Boer ponies.

Experience, later on in the war, taught that once their ponies were in danger the Boers would clear out. That is exactly what happened after this one shell. Within a few minutes a couple of hundred Boers galloped away from those kopjes for dear life, in the direction of Bloemfontein. If only Mr. Cannon had taken our advice about his strained carriage, that shell would have hit the kopje he aimed at, and it is just possible that the Boer left would not have incontinently given way, made the whole Boer position untenable and caused a hasty general retreat. Kruger and Steyn were known to be there, and we had hoped that the enemy defence would be stubborn enough to give French time to get right round their rear and capture a fine haul of prisoners—possibly the Presidents themselves.

Disappointment number three.

If the yarn, which went round the army, was correct they actually escaped capture by a very strange coincidence.

Two days previously a detachment of Burmah Mounted Infantry had joined the army. They had brought with them their own sturdy little ponies and wore white helmets so, to prevent trouble, word was passed round that these Burmese Planters would be much obliged if no one would shoot them in mistake for the Johannesburg Mounted Police—the famous Zarps—who also wore white helmets.

Towards the end of this Osfontein-Poplar Grove " battle ", it was said that a battalion, lying down in extended order, allowed a carriage, surrounded by a white-helmeted escort, to pass along their front; they mistook the Zarps for the Burmese Mounted Infantry, and let slip the chance of capturing both Presidents, who were in that carriage.

All that morning I watched Lord Roberts and Kitchener directing a " full dress "—if almost bloodless battle. They were never more than thirty yards from our two guns, and it was extremely interesting to note the difference in their personalities. Lord Roberts entered into the spirit of the " show " with almost boyish zest. He moved about constantly, talked freely to people, personally ordered those two " fatal " (?) shots at the Ant Hills, looked through one of our two big telescopes to find another target, saw a long line of retreating Boer wagons and ordered the guns to fire at them.

"Beg pardon, sir! Them wagons are ambulance wagons," the signalman at the other tripod telescope sang out, and Lord Roberts looked again and said: " So they are; very well, don't fire on them", and smiled at the grinning signalman, as much as to say, " We know they're full of ammunition, don't we?"

I cannot really convey the impression of him that I want to do—the simplicity of his whole demeanour—his eagerness to find a target for this new toy, the high velocity 4.7—his comradeship with everyone round him. He did get a little perturbed when the Mounted Infantry, behind our kopje, were not ready when he wanted to "slip" them, but it was more irritation with the Boers, who had not waited, than with the Mounted Infantry who had not expected the order so early in the day.

Kitchener sat back on a shooting-stick close to me, with his field-glasses constantly glued to his eyes, gloomy and taciturn—almost motionless. The telephone operator behind him kept sending messages urging French to hurry and got back replies that his horses could scarcely trot—at which Kitchener grunted but said nothing. He did show impatience when he could not get hold of the Colonel commanding the mounted infantry behind us, and it was evident that the whole enemy force was in full retreat long before the advancing Guards' brigade had got in touch with them. Otherwise he showed not the least animation, and not the slightest interest in our guns, although he had never before seen them fire at long ranges. In fact, he seemed the typical, stern, aloof War Lord, without that indefinable "something" which Lord Roberts possessed.

Our men would have worked until they dropped, pleased enough to do something that "Little Bobs" wanted them to do; they would have worked just as hard for Kitchener, but not with the primary idea of "pleasing" him.

After this "battle" we got our guns down from the kopje and started the seventy mile trek to Bloemfontein. We lost many oxen on the way, and suffered considerably from lack of food and from the "dysenteric" troubles brought on by indigestible trek-ox, the very hard army biscuit, the insufficient and beastly water—and the sand mixed with them. If we suffered, the infantry suffered more; men dropped in scores, weak from colic and diarrhœa. As many as possible we lifted on our wagons, many in a pitiable condition. Perhaps more pitiable still were the horses and mules. They muzzled the coarse grass down to the roots to try to find a tender shoot, and swallowed much sand; they screamed in their agony of pain before they died, and they died in thousands. For weeks afterwards it was possible to travel blindfold from Bloemfontein to Kimberley, by the stench of dead animals!

During one twenty-six hours of that march and before the oxen "gave out" and could only stagger along, our guns actually covered thirty-four miles.*

Eventually we reached the outskirts of Bloemfontein and halted close to a huge mealie plantation, into which our native "boys" disappeared all night, returning in the morning scarcely able to walk, swollen tight as drums with Indian corn—but with broad grins on their once more happy faces.

Another short march and we had completed our 158 miles from railway to railway, and bivouacked near the Free States Arsenal and the Lunatic Asylum. Our first job was to send a signalman down to Government House to reeve halyards and hoist the Union Jack over it.

It was extraordinarily pleasant to see a railway again, and to know that it would soon bring up urgently needed supplies. These included a couple of cases of whisky waiting for us down at Port Elizabeth and labelled—if I remember correctly—"Spare parts 4.7 guns, Grant's Naval Brigade, Urgent".

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*On a subsequent occasion, after I had left the Brigade, these guns covered 37 miles in 13 hours.

Lord Roberts inspected the Naval Brigades a week after the entry into Bloemfontein, and having made his inspection called in front of him the Naval Doctors, their sick-berth staff and stoker stretcher bearers, to give them especial praise. I, who had had no opportunity of distinguishing myself, felt entirely out of place among the others who had—Fleet-Surgeon Porter, Staff-Surgeon Mourilyan and Surgeon Beadnell and their own stokers. Such a distinction was probably unique in the history of the Navy, yet no official notice whatever was taken of it!

By a strange coincidence, Admiral Maxse, a spectator, had belonged to a Naval Brigade in the Crimean War, the last time a Naval Brigade, on active service, had been inspected by a Field Marshal—Lord Raglan.

A few days later we played a cricket match against the Grahamstown Mounted Infantry on the Bloemfontein Athletic Ground.

On a matting wicket and under a very hot sun we "compiled" some eighty runs before adjourning to the Bloemfontein Club for lunch. After an exceedingly prolonged lunch interval we proceeded to trundle out our opponents. We started bravely enough, but by the time the score had mounted to 178 and the first pair showed not the slightest indication of being caught, bowled, run out or disposed of by fair means or foul, we began to weary of bowling at them. The heat was very great so, by mutual consent, we adjourned again to the Club and stayed there.

We could not make a "two day" fixture of this match because a General Hospital erected its marquees on the ground that evening, and the officer who had made our top score was one of the first to be sent there—with enteric.

The club had made all officers honorary members, and the huge influx taxed its capacity to the utmost. We dined there often, smoking afterwards on the stoep until "Last Post" in the great square.

I shall never forget those "Last Posts"—the ceremonial marching and counter-marching of fife and drums, of skirling pipers across the moon bathed space, surrounded by an orderly throng of towns-people and natives, and then the "Last Post" itself sounded on massed silver bugles, ending in that last long note fading away into the crisp night air with its wonderfully plaintive cadence.

We did not speak much as afterwards we walked hurriedly back to our wagons.

During the seven weeks halt in Bloemfontein, eighty-nine officers and men, out of a total strength of less than four hundred, left the Naval Brigades on stretchers, suffering from typhoid fever and dysenteric diarrhœa.

Cases had occurred away back at Paardeberg, and many during the march itself, but here the epidemic raged. The army became practically immobile during this period.

Flies—horribly great blue-bottles—swarmed hideously everywhere. They crawled about the latrines; they covered our food. If one opened the lid of a jam tin, thrust a spoon in it, drew it out and pressed down the lid, the jam on the spoon would be literally covered with these flies, before one could put the tin down. Is it any wonder that typhoid raged?

All night they sought warmth in the tents, and at daybreak the tops inside were black with them. We used to kill thousands by lighting paper and passing the flame across the black masses.

One battalion had brought up its brass instruments —or had found some in Bloemfontein. At any rate, the bandsmen were sent out to practise the Dead March in *Saul*, close to the Naval bivouac where I myself lay at the time, on a stretcher under a wagon, with a high temperature, shivering in the heat and feeling desperately ill. The constant practising of this "Dead March" morning and afternoon for three days, until they became note perfect, not only got on my nerves but depressed everyone else.

When fit again I was sent to the Convent of the Holy Family to assist the short-handed army doctors. The nuns had previously converted it into a hospital for Boers, and now opened it for our own sick and wounded. They had prepared a camp bed for me in a small summer-house in the beautifully shaded Convent grounds, and to enjoy thoroughly its peaceful luxury, after sleeping in my clothes on a stretcher or on the ground for nearly three months, I dived to the bottom of the seaman's bag which contained my kit and found a very ragged pair of pyjamas. In the morning I made my bed, folded the pyjamas and hid them under the pillow. That night they had disappeared and I felt much too diffident to ask what had become of them. Eventually, some nights later, I found them under my pillow, patched—in fact, more patches than original material. The hard worked nuns had found time, somehow or other, to mend them for me; but as one does not discuss pyjamas with nuns the subject was never referred to.

Presently, some Army Reserve Sisters were sent to the Convent and took charge of the nursing. They visibly wilted away on a menu of bully beef, occasional Maconochie ration, and army biscuit—the only food procurable for some time. One of them, a very strong-minded young Sister, had charge of a small hut in the grounds and its four officer patients, the colonel of a composite cavalry regiment, a duke, an earl, and a young veterinary officer. These and the colonel's huge servant she ruled with a rod of iron.

One morning she found the colonel sitting up in bed against orders, reading a newspaper, and as I passed along the stoep outside his open window I heard the Sister's stern voice: " Lie down! Colonel", and his half humorous, half irritated reply, " My dear young lady; d'you know who you are speaking to? I'm Colonel ——, commanding Her Majesty's 66th Dragoon Guards—and I *won't* lie down!"

"You naughty old man; lie down at once," was all the satisfaction he got, and as I entered the redoubtable cavalry leader and very delightful old gentleman was resignedly pulling the sheet up to his chin, while the Sister shook a menacing finger at the other three to keep them from tittering, and the huge servant gazed at her with respectful awe.

Lord Roberts, looking tired and worried, used to come once a week to see the patients, and although thunderstorms constantly broke towards evening, no one ever remembered to bring any protecting cloak for him. On several occasions he rode away as the pattering of rain preceded the usual deluge, and it was just as well for him, and everybody else, that Lady Roberts did come up to Bloemfontein to look after him—whatever were the obvious disadvantages.

Into this convent many Dutch and British farmers had sent their children for safety. There must have been some fifty or sixty of them, and on wet evenings the Mother Superior used to get me to play tunes from the Student's Song Book while they sang lustily, and the nuns, off duty, joined in. She discovered that I had a beautiful voice—pure tenor I have always maintained against almost incredible opposition—and as Easter Day approached, wanted me to sing the " Ave Maria " song, adapted to the air from *Cavalleria Rusticana.*

Guided up to the gallery of the chapel and guarded sternly by two elderly nuns, I used to practise this song while a shy young nun down below, at the small organ, played the accompaniment. This wonderful musical treat should have been given at High Mass on Easter morning, and I dreaded it with exceeding dread, because all the Roman Catholics in the Army were expected to attend. However, on the Saturday afternoon, along came a stoker—my *deus ex machina*—leading " Mazeppa", and with orders for me to return to the Naval Brigade, forthwith, as marching orders had arrived. Sad as was the parting with the Convent and my bed in the summer house, I escaped that solo—and so did next day's congregation!

I joined the Naval guns, which now occupied the crest of a hill (Naval hill) two miles north of Bloemfontein, and turned in once more on my stretcher under a wagon. The wagon stood on a pebbly slope and an extra-sized thunderstorm in the middle of the night washed the pebbles, the stretcher and myself out into the open!

Cold weather had now commenced, and the epidemic of typhoid began to subside: we were supplied with warm serge to replace our worn-out cotton khaki, and on the 24th April, Grant's two 4.7's—my Naval Brigade—finally parted company with the main Naval Brigade and marched east, with our old friends the Highlanders, to try and intercept De Wet, trekking north after his unsuccessful swoop on Wepener.

After two days' marching we hauled our guns to the top of Mamema Kop, some thirty miles from Bloemfontein, and not far from Thaba Nju.

We had a wonderful field of fire, and waited jubilantly for De Wet, who, however, wriggled out of the net spread for him—and far out of reach of our guns.

But before he came I was recalled to Bloemfontein; and leaving " Mazeppa " and the Brigade with great grief, tramped into Bloemfontein in charge of a small convoy of wagons laden with sick and wounded from the 9th Division.

On the way, we passed Sanna's Post where Broadwood's Cavalry guns had been so badly hammered some weeks ago, and where Burnham, the Scout, had been the first man captured. Traces of this most unpleasant episode still lay on the banks of the Spruit.

At Bloemfontein I received orders to return to Simon's Town, and on reporting myself on board the *Doris* four days later found, to my great joy, that I was to leave almost immediately as P.M.O. of a Naval Brigade in Natal, a billet which my old Captain Sir Edward Chichester, had obtained for me.

However, fate ruled otherwise; by some extraordinary mischance and bad luck I missed the steamer which should have taken me to Durban; a doctor from a ship stationed there was sent up-country instead of me, and I concluded my Boer War experiences as P.M.O. of the Flagship.

While I was serving on board her she dashed off on a very secret mission. In fact, so secret was it that if a lady at a big private dinner-party, up the line, two nights before we sailed, had not told one of our people sitting next to her, "that the *Doris* was to escort Strathcona's Horse to Kosi Bay, south of Delagoa Bay, and land them there to make a dash for Koomati Poort and its railway bridge", no one—except the highest in authority—would have known where we were going or why.

We passed Durban in the afternoon of June 1st, and received a signal from the Bluff: "Lord Roberts has——," the rest of the signal being unintelligible. Later on we heard that the missing words were, "occupied Johannesburg".

Next morning we anchored off Kosi Bay, where the little *Widgeon* had already landed a small party through the heavy surf and could not get her men off again. We had brought surf boats from Port Elizabeth and rescued them before night, watched by a small crowd of niggers, armed with spears and knob kerries.

Two hundred men of Strathcona's Horse, their horses and three hundred pack animals arrived in two transports; they were keen enough to go ashore, but on that day it would have been difficult enough to land the men—quite impossible to swim the horses through the surf.

Next day, the surf having gone down during the night, a further attempt would have been made had not the *Philomel* arrived with the news that the Boers had learnt of the proposed foray and had entrenched a strong position between Kosi Bay and Koomati Poort.

This incident illustrates the grave disadvantage of the plague of society women which went out to the Cape during this war. They lived on the excitement of worming secrets from over-trusting officials; from them, indeed, no secrets could long be hid, and they babbled—in strict confidence of course—everything they learnt.

So this *very secret* expedition, having been "given away", returned to Durban and the *Doris* back to Simon's Town.

When I had left Simonstown for the front, four months before, Colonel Schiel and the Boers captured at Elandslaagte had been confined in a ship in the Bay. Now, however, a camp had been provided for prisoners on the shore just beyond the dockyard, and as many of the men had never seen the sea until they arrived there, they took great delight in "paddling" at the water's edge. A shark seized one of these men one afternoon, and commenced to drag him out. His comrades dashed to his rescue and hauled him ashore, but not before one leg had been bitten off below the knee. He died shortly afterwards.

Sharks were extraordinarily numerous in the Bay at this time, attracted by the many mules thrown overboard from transports anchored there. Daring as they became, I have never heard, before or since, of any venturing into two feet of water to seize a man—or anything else.

A month later I had to return home on private affairs, and was seen off on the transport *Aurania* by my old Captain. She had on board some eight hundred sick and wounded, and also many people from Mafeking, who had been given a passage to England and back, as a reward for their pluck and privations during the siege.

Among the passengers was Roger Casement, at that time Consul at Loanda. He, a young naval lieutenant and myself, chummed up during the voyage and spent much time together. He could spin yarns by the hour, yarns of tribal wars and disputes, and in most he was the central figure to whom natives came tramping hundreds of miles, to squat outside his bungalow while he settled their differences. Extraordinarily interesting as were these yarns, they were narrated more as a background to emphasise the almost limitless moral authority he exercised over the natives, than as interesting in themselves. He appeared to me somewhat of a visionary, affected by long sojourn far from civilisation where he had had full scope for satisfying the very human craving for exercising sway—for putting things right, and that return to England meant, to him, the abandonment of this isolation and all that his rather self-centred, gloomy disposition demanded from life.

Among the Mafeking ladies were three sisters—half castes and no possible mistake about that. In

Mafeking, during the siege, when all had had to work together, social differences had been almost forgotten, and during the first week of the voyage these three were as excited as the others at the prospect of going "home"; although it was entirely obvious that they would be much less conspicuous in a Basuto kraal than in a London hotel. As the ship drew nearer to England they began to feel a difference in the attitude of their fellow townsfolk, lost all their joyousness, and, when the ship arrived at Southampton, did not want to leave her.

Considering the devoted work they had done during the siege it was very pitiful.

CHAPTER IX

1900-1902

Pembroke Dockyard—Yachting—The Dockyard "Crawl"—"The Huguenots"—Planchette—Join "Ariadne" for West Indies—Halifax—Strenuous Times—A Worried Governor—Bar Harbour—Bermuda—Quebec—American Trippers—The C.-in-C. and the Bagman.

In October, 1900, I was appointed to Pembroke Dockyard, and for nearly two years remained in that distant corner of Wales. I possessed a sailing dinghy in which I explored the creeks, "pills" and upper reaches of Milford Haven; and a chum of mine, Jackson, a sapper subaltern of Submarine Miners, owned an extremely antiquated five-ton, half-decked ketch-rigged fishing-boat, in which we often ventured out into the open sea.

Jackson held strongly the opinion that however useless anything might be at the present, "it might come in handy some day", with the result that he had five anchors—and only one cable—and the little cabin was so chock-a-block with burnt-out saucepans, frying pans and kettles, lanterns and worn-out oil stoves and buckets that there was little room for our feet.

If his provision locker contained half a loaf—generally mouldy—a tin of sausages and a half-empty tin of condensed milk he was always ready for a forty-eight hour cruise; in fact, he was the most rabid enthusiast I ever met.

On our very first open-sea voyage in this old craft, we ventured round the end corner of Wales as far as Fishguard, and chanced it with some diffidence because the local fishermen warned us to keep clear of Jack Sound—a narrow "race" between the "corner" and a small island.

The Admiralty Sailing Directions also gave a most libellous description of that Sound; none except fully-decked craft must attempt it at any time on account of a dangerous "over-fall", perilous, even for them, because it concealed numerous unpleasant rocks, just awash, in the middle of the fair way. We looked at our huge gaping "well", thought of that overfall tumbling on board and swamping the *Pride of the Ocean* and decided, with one accord, to give Jack Sound as wide a berth as possible.

But when we cleared St. Anne's Head, our breeze died away, and we soon found ourselves drifting sideways in the grip of a strong tide which had decided to take us through it "willy nilly"; we could no more escape than a water-logged fly in a stream. So we prepared for the worst, spread a tarpaulin over the well, got up buckets, saucepans and kettles—holes in them or not—and stood by to bale out the expected deluge.

The noise of the overfall sounded in our ears; we could see the white spray momentarily revealing jagged rocks in the forbidding looking channel ahead of us, and the *Pride of the Ocean* simply lost her head, turned round and round, like a top, as she was sucked through, swirling this way and that round those rocks like a piece of drift-wood, until, almost too astonished to grasp the fact, we found ourselves beyond it and in smooth water—and not a thimbleful had come on board!

We never thought much of Jack Sound after that!

However, we met half a gale round the next corner and only just managed to reach Fishguard in the nick of time.

Jackson developed a mania for sailing her single-handed, and often took her up as far as Holyhead and back. In later years he had a yacht built for him at Colombo, and sailed her from there to Trincomali single-handed.

In this harbour, poor fellow, he met his death when a leaking dinghy sank a few yards from where this yacht was moored; and though he could swim strongly his body was never recovered.

The mediæval castles—some of them still occupied—with which Pembrokeshire is dotted were always a source of delight to me. Like the American lady gazing at Westminster Abbey, castles always made me "bubbly in the think tank". I did not want to learn their history; I could people them with doughty knights, fair ladies and stalwart men-at-arms of my own imagination, and weave round their weather-beaten bastions and sullen keeps more romance than the sordidness of actual fact would warrant—and that is all I asked of them.

The old Bishop who wrote, "the Rich and the Noble . . . being much given to feuds and bloodshed, fortify themselves . . . and by their strongholds subdue their equals and oppress their inferiors" was not writing of Pembrokeshire, but his description would, no doubt, apply.

In the grandest of all—Pembroke Castle—we played tennis on its tilting green, crowding out the squires and dames who peopled it only in the moonlight, when the great gates were closed and no mortal eye could spy on them.

The dockyard itself always seemed to me, even in those days of flourishing finances, to be a very superfluous and unnecessary luxury, and though everyone connected with it tried to prove that ships could be, and were built there, as cheaply as at any other dockyard, I would not be convinced.

Houses for the dockyard men were scarce, so that many had to live in the villages in the neighbourhood, some as far away as seven miles. The long tramp to work and home, day after day, winter and summer, a tragedy in itself, was absolutely incompatible with a satisfactory day's work in between.

A parson's wife living in one of these remoter villages sympathised one day with the wife of a workman who had so far to go to his work, and received the unexpected and illuminating reply, "Well, Mum, he do rest all day!"

Practically all the employees belonged to the locality—a really very isolated community—and by inter-marriage for long years had become so closely inter-related that it was no uncommon thing to find a gang of riggers or shipwrights, etc., whose foremen and time-keepers were the fathers or uncles or brothers of most of the gang. This certainly entailed grave disadvantages. I do know that the well-known "dockyard crawl" was more apparent in Pembroke Dockyard than in any of the other three great dockyards, and even the dockyard Shire horses adapted themselves to it. A couple of these splendidly conditioned animals might be seen drawing, painfully and slowly, a small empty lorry, but at the first sound of the dinner bell, the drivers would slip off their harness and away they would go, helter-skelter across the pieces of waste land, jumping the low chain "railings" in between, frisking like colts, each trying to get to the harness shed and his feed before the others. I often went out into the yard simply to watch this horse play—and some sign of active vitality.

As part of my duty, I had to ride round the country and visit dockyardmen who had been reported absent "sick", and during the spring and at other times—especially "potato time"—it was often very amusing, as I rode up a lane towards a cottage, to see, over the hedge, the poor "sick man" busy hoeing his ground. He would hear the horse's hoof, look up, catch sight of me and dash for his cottage and his bed, where after listening to a long-winded account of his ailments from his wife and hearing the thumps of his boots on the floor overhead, I would find him probably fully dressed but minus those boots.

Some of these Welsh dockyard men were a very "slim", childishly "slim", lot of people.

However, Pembroke Dockyard is closed at last; it had become too much of a local vested interest, and for years it had not been a national necessity.

The Captain Superintendent was then Captain J. W. Barlow, D.S.O., one of the kindest and most unselfish men who ever stepped. Later on he became engrossed in the unhappy Beresford-Fisher feud, which did such grievous harm to the Service, and I fear that his prospects suffered by his too loyal partisanship.

While stationed here, I wrote and edited an account of the work of the Naval Brigades in the South African War. This most interesting job, entailed a surprisingly large volume of correspondence, with many long intervals of "marking time" owing to the fact that most of the contributors were now widely scattered. Commander C. N. Robinson, who then edited the *Army and Navy Illustrated* and still continues to contribute largely to *Brassey's Naval Annual*, gave me great assistance.

I also helped to supervise the fitting up of the new hospital and my own house, which the Admiralty were building alongside it. When this last was completed, I took proud possession, with the quaintest old couple to look after me who could ever have stepped out of early Victorian times. He was sixty, thin and austere, with mutton-chop whiskers and just the slight, deprecatory stoop and the nervous clasping of hands—"washing" his hands—of the perfect, obsequious stage butler; she was fifty-five, plump and motherly. Together they looked after me like parents, and because of their aristocratic deportment quickly earned local fame as "The Huguenots". Only a few days after they had installed themselves I was met by the butler with a request, "to place before me a proposition concerning the domestics' 'quarters.'" I kindly granted an interview!

"I fear, sir," he began, "that you may perhaps consider it presumptive of Mrs. Spencer and myself to suggest changes in the domestic department of your household, but we have taken this liberty—the great liberty, sir—and Mrs. Spencer and myself, sir, would be greatly honoured if you would inspect the suggested alterations and—perhaps, sir—approve them?"

He led the way to the domestic department of my household and I meekly followed. With an apologetic wave of his hand he indicated the alterations. They had moved the tiny kitchen table in the tiny kitchen, from the wall to the centre!

"With your permission, sir, Mrs. Spencer and myself would be grateful, sir, if we might call that"—and he waved his hand towards the fire-place and oven—'the Kitchen'—and *that* side, sir," and he waved it round towards the little window, "the Servants' Hall?"

I graciously acquiesced.

The two had been "in service" since they were boy and girl together in the same house, married "in service", and remained "in service" ever since;

but until they came to me had never had their Sundays "off" together. Their delight when they found that I should never want them after breakfast on Sunday was almost pathetic. They both worked for the Salvation Army. "The Army, sir, enables Mrs. Spencer and myself to give a little more help to those who need it than does the Established Church," was the apology (!) for the little social lapse which they feared I should not otherwise understand.

Watching one day from the window the launch of H.M.S. *Essex*, the stirring sight of a great ship's first plunge stirred him to be reminiscent.

"Mrs. Spencer and myself, sir, have only once before had the pleasure, sir, of serving a Naval officer, sir; an Admiral, sir, a very nice gentleman; a very nice gentleman indeed, sir; but not very often —if I may say so—sober."

"A drunkard; poor devil," I said.

"Oh! No! sir, not a drunkard; oh, no, certainly not a drunkard; only not very often sober, sir."

When I eventually left Pembroke Dock, after much too short a period of this domestic bliss, and much too hurriedly to pack my belongings, I left all that job to them, and afterwards he wrote to my home, " that as he did not consider it consonant with my rank and dignity (I was still a junior Surgeon) to number the packing cases and boxes from 1 to 13, he had taken the very great liberty to number them from 54 to 67!"

I have often wondered what became of them.

I happened one night to be in the Sappers' and Gunners' mess at the top of the hill, in the *Defencibles* Barracks, and a party of noisy young R.G.A. Cork Militia subalterns, in another room, were experimenting with a planchette board. Presently they called out " Somebody ask a question?" and I, knowing that I should have to go to sea very soon, called back " Where shall I go to next?"

In a few minutes they sang out " the board has spelt out H-A-L-I-F-A; can you make any sense out of that?"

I naturally said " Halifax"—as strangely enough did turn out to be the first place I touched after leaving England three months later. These subalterns had only arrived for their annual training that day, were entire strangers to me, and we were not in sight of each other at any time during their experiments, so " planchette " believers can make what they like out of this coincidence; it certainly did happen.

I left the pleasant little out-of-the-way place with many regrets, and went off to join the *Ariadne*, the new Flagship of the North American and West Indies Squadron, flying the flag of Vice-Admiral A. L. Douglas, K.C.B., and commanded by Captain M. E. Browning, with a crew of eight hundred officers and men.

On a Thursday, 5th June, 1902, we commissioned; on the Sunday held a Service to commemorate the termination of the Boer War, and a few days later took part in the Coronation Review, interrupted by King Edward's operation for appendicitis. More interesting than all the English and foreign ships gathered there was the tiny *Turbinia*, dashing up and down the lines, in a smother of spray and stern wave. Those who had never before seen her were now vastly impressed by the wonderful speed her Parsons' turbines gave her.

We left for Halifax with the Admiral's wife and daughters on board, and having arrived there, received a chaplain, band instruments and her wardroom piano from the *Crescent*—the ship we relieved. Having sent them across to us, she dashed out of harbour, on her way home, before we could regret our bargain.

For the next three years we experienced an almost ceaseless round of social gaiety, occasionally interrupted by the necessity of coaling and the preposterous demands of the Gunnery Lieutenant for opportunities to train his guns' crews. We burnt 30,000 tons of coal, and steamed 36,000 miles, generally on passages only too short to allow us to rest and recuperate from one strenuous round of dances, "at-homes", tennis parties—tea-parties—football—tennis—hockey and cricket matches, to another.

It must be just such a time of stress that retired Naval Officers recall to mind when they write to the Press to dilate on the hardships of naval life, and I do not think that the British Public sympathises sufficiently with what we had—and I suppose still have—to endure on such lucky occasions.

The smaller the community, often the more strenuous was the provisional programme arranged for us by the local Entertainment Committee. The great difficulty used to be to repay the hospitality lavished on us. "Government House", wherever we went, *had*, of course, to be "roped in" for a grand "ball"; and some of the Governors, I am sure, would have been most heartily thankful if they had not had the privilege. It was not every one of them who could afford to supply the local residents—to say nothing of a crowd of thirsty naval officers—with a night "out"; and the little "drink" bill, next morning, must have made some of them thank Heaven that the Flagship and the Fleet only came, like Christmas, once a year.

There was one old gentleman who, no doubt, had worried about this particular question, and having fortified himself unnecessarily vigorously for the ordeal before him, had a brilliant idea in his, by now, thoroughly misty intelligence, and decided that in the interests of temperance and to set an example locally, *his* Ball should be a teetotal one.

Clinging gracefully to a pillar in his grand entrance hall, he received his guests; we, from the ships, had been playing golf, tennis and cricket all the afternoon in a hot sun, now danced as strenuously until past midnight and by that time were as dry as a limekiln. We could not find a spoonful of whisky anywhere; the butler, nearly out of his mind with worry, knew that a large stock had been laid in for the occasion but could not find it, *now*—and we began to grow restive with nothing but soda-water to assuage our really honourably acquired thirst.

At half-past one, we went in search of the Governor and eventually found him sound asleep in his study. As we stirred him, courteously, to semi-consciousness, we politely intimated that it was an old custom of ours to drink a little whisky at this time of night, in memory of the dear ones we had left in England and if he would be so kind . . . !

"Not a drop do you have; we're all teetotal in this damned town, thank God!" the Governor hiccoughed; and starting to activity took up a defensive position, with his back to a great oak cupboard, and glared at us.

This was a fatal tactical error; we gently pressed him into his chair, opened the cupboard and there found the object of our search—a whole pile of bottles. We brought in tumblers and soda-water, gave the Governor a double "peg", and helped ourselves as liberally; soon he joyously recovered from his temporary convictions, expressed his intention of "going along to see how the boys and girls were getting along", so we steered him to one of his beloved pillars and left him clinging to it affectionately. He certainly never had a chance of getting inside his study again—it was always too full.

That " Ball Party " was also memorable because the " lads from the village " came along and hurled stones at us indiscriminately, while we were sitting out with our partners in the grounds. Telephone messages brought the necessary police, but not until the men guests had to make several charges to disperse the " lads".

From the bleakness of St. John, Newfoundland, to the torrid heat of George Town, Demerara, everywhere we went, we received boundless hospitality, and if that at George Town was possibly the warmest, our four days' entertainment at Bar Harbour, Maine, was probably the most lavish. The Boston and Philadelphian visitors to that watering place placed themselves, their houses, clubs and golf links at our disposal and simply swept us off our feet.

We *had* to play golf on the wonderful Kebo Valley Links—whether we could play or not. We were driven out to them, given a partner and a bag of tools (if we had none of our own), a supply of balls, and trotted round. By the time that at least fifteen junior officers and some half-dozen ward-room ingenues—in addition to the twenty-two or three experts—had spent four days of arduous "digging" on the slope at the famous elbow-hole, the sight of that splendid piece of lawn—one could not call it a " fair way "—must have made the anguished green keeper want to commit hara-kiri. Our partners always appeared to have an inexhaustible supply of new Haskell balls in their hip pockets, and to express appreciation of any club they lent you meant that it was yours.

They carried little black deed-bags; each had his deed-bag locker next to his clothes locker in the club house, and each deed-bag contained a bottle of whisky because Bar Harbour is in Maine, and Maine, even then, was " dry ", and the laws had to have *some* respect shown to them!

But, Halifax, where, every summer, we spent three months tied up to the dockyard wall, was the *one* place in the Station for most of us. The people, though far from rich, made up for that by the kindness and the simple warmth of all they did to make our sojourn pleasant. On coming back from a cruise or from Bermuda in the Spring, we steamed up its long harbour to Bedford Basin, came down again and made fast alongside, got the telephone aboard, rang up our pals (when the signal midshipman could spare us a moment) and felt we were at home; in the autumn, when the first signs of ice appeared, we used to leave it with genuine regret.

Dalhousie University and their strenuous Rugger team (generally much too strong for us), the Wanderer's Cricket and Football Clubs, the Golf Club, the "Cocktail" club on the North West Arm, the shooting and fishing we could get within twenty miles, all made this an ideal centre, to say nothing of the men and women who peopled it.

Once we helped to put out a great fire there—some half mile of shops and warehouses on both sides of Water Street—I think it was Water Street—and landed two hundred men. Our Marine subaltern, very wisely placed sentries on a liquor shop whose upper works were already burning furiously. The local "salvage" company (which took the place of an English fire brigade) concentrated all their energies, or most of them, in trying to "save" this liquor, and not being able to get at it brought along the irate police, who promptly arrested not only the sentries but the Subaltern himself, thus vindicating the superiority of the Civil over Military Authority, but not doing much to put out the fire!

The Liberal Party, at this time, held power, and political corruption appeared to us to be universal. Ardent politicians, in spasms of confidences, chuckled over the fact that even Americans came across the border to learn " how to do it ". It appeared in very amusing guises, as, for instance, when the " scion " of a leading Halifax family, with every necessary qualification except that he had voted " Conservative " at the last election, failed time after time to obtain a commission in the Permanent Force, and obtained it within a fortnight of forswearing his political creed and joining the Liberals.

Even the conductors of Pullman cars were often political appointments, and one who once condescended to talk to me on a long journey, when an election was imminent, feared that he would lose his job if Borden got in—which he did eventually, with a stern determination to cleanse the Augean stables.

It was not, however, so amusing when the Quebec bridge collapsed—the result of another little bit of political jobbery, so rumour had it, which must have given the " system " an unpleasant shock.

Bermuda, where we had our winter head-quarters and the Admiral another beautiful official residence, never attracted us in the same way. Grassy Bay, in which we anchored off the little dockyard, often behaved particularly disagreeably, and it meant "boat work", always, when we went ashore. The ordinary N.O., when once he has cut his wisdom teeth would, I believe, prefer to have his ship tied up to a desert island to " out in the stream " off the gayest of harbours. Not to have to catch a routine boat ashore or off to the ship, and to be able to walk over the side or up the side, at any time he chooses, is his idea of bliss. He can always make a football ground and a golf-links on a desert island or go for a tramp—and at any time he likes, with no one to curse him if he keeps the boat ashore waiting for half a minute, and nobody to curse but himself if he comes down a few minutes late and finds that the " dinner " boat has already shoved off.

At Hamilton, four miles from our anchorage, the two big hotels catered for a fairly wealthy class of Americans, and looked upon the Flagship's visit as one of their chief assets for attracting visitors. They advertised in American papers that their dances were attended by " English Naval Officers *in uniform* "—and so they were, for some reason or other, and probably are to this day. At any rate, we danced there some five nights a week during our first visit but slacked away subsequently. We really grew weary—somewhat weary—of our fair partners, whose charms of witty repartee and ceaseless energy—so captivating at first—soon palled on all of us except some of the younger gun-room devotees, who would worship at any shrine, at the price of a really good " blow-out feed".

I think that this type of hustling Americans was more aggressive at Quebec than anywhere else. Whenever we anchored, there, American visitors to that town used to swarm aboard; they came to " register for the next social "; they all wanted to write their names in the Admiral's visitors' book; some entire strangers once sent a note off demanding that a boat should be sent to take them on board; once on board they swarmed everywhere, both men and women, and nowhere was sacred from their inquisitiveness. They would have taken away the guns as mementoes if they could have done so and did take away any little movables they could conceal—small gun fittings—ward-room spoons—plates and menu-holders.

Our Commander, a most modest, retiring man, had had painted outside his cabin door the notice, " Don't knock; come in! "—to remind orderlies and messengers not to disturb his nerves by thumping on the door. One morning, while at Quebec, he had returned from a long ride, ashore, and was sitting in his little round bath on his cabin deck, gaily sponging himself, when from outside he heard a delicious gurgle of " Well! I call that real nice "; his curtain was pulled right across and in burst two charming damsels who could not retreat precipitately because their just-as-inquisitive father pressed behind them and effectually blocked the doorway.

The Commander had that notice removed next time we went to Quebec.

The Admiral, himself who did not divest himself at any time, easily, of dignity and importance, also had one slightly disconcerting encounter with an American in that part of Canada. He and a party of local celebrities were returning one day by train from a fishing expedition. In his " deerstalker " hat he had stuck some twenty " flies ", and sitting there among his friends he noticed a man eyeing him and his hat with unbounded curiosity and admiration, an admiration he presently could not keep to himself, for he suddenly came across, pushed himself down in the seat alongside him, held out his hand and burst out with, " Say! stranger; shake; that's real cute; I'm a bagman myself; reckon you're bumming the fish tackle line!"

CHAPTER X

1902-1903

Venezuelan Revolution—Castro—Capture of His Fleet—Blockade—Dash up the Orinoco in a Destroyer—Revolutionary Commandant—Castilia—Alligators—A Biblical Picture—Christmas Dinner—Puerto Cabello—de Lamos, the Puma—West Indian Cruise—St. Pierre—Havana—U.S. " Maine " —Leonard Wood—Trinidad—A Nigger Policeman—The " tertium quid ".

FROM her first visit to Bermuda, the *Ariadne* hurried down to Trinidad to help settle some matters with President Castro, of Venezuela.

This fiery little gentleman had the fortune—or misfortune—to misrule a country the constitution of which enacted that insurgents should have belligerent rights if their motives were political—a conveniently elastic term—and that the property of insurgents, presumably unsuccessful insurgents, should not be liable to confiscation. These two clauses naturally offered a premium to insurrections.

Castro not only irritated his opponents by forgetting to treat them as belligerents, or respect their property, but also confiscated the property of the foreign merchants (who secretly favoured the insurrections) and imposed a thirty per cent. custom duty on all British imports.

He styled himself the Napoleon of the West; looked to the United States and the Monroe Doctrine to support him if the English, Germans, Dutch and Italians became too persistent in their demands for redress; and with his little fleet closed the navigation of the Orinoco and taught the insurgents, both to west and south of him, some useful, if elementary, lessons in the value of sea power, by stopping their export trade and preventing them obtaining either revenue or supplies.

Gathering the squadron as we steamed south, we eventually mustered off Port of Spain, Trinidad, the *Charybdis*, *Indefatigable*, *Tribune*, the sloops *Alert* and *Fantome*, the destroyers *Quail* and *Rocket*, even the little "yacht" *Columbine*, and made a brave show compared to the German *Vineta*, *Gazelle* and *Panther*, and the Italian *Carlo Alberta* and *Bausan*. The *Pallas*—painted the new universal grey colour—joined us from England, and a squadron of U.S. battleships—*Kearsage*, *Alabama* and *Massachusetts*—came all this way down to give Christmas leave—and remind us of the Monroe Doctrine.

The *Bolivar*, Castro's flagship (!), had been taken possession of by the *Charybdis*, while coaling in Trinidad harbour, and shortly afterwards all the rest of the Venezuelan navy, captured at various places along the coast line, were brought here, including the only one worth capturing, the *Restorador*, lately Gould's yacht *Atalanta*, prize to the Germans. Manning all our prizes, we sent them to assist our various cruisers to blockade the whole coast, while the *Ariadne* remained at Trinidad and entertained those wives and daughters of the Venezuelan Government and insurgent parties who had come there for a "change of air".

Castro possessed forts at all the important trade ports, and at Puerto Cabello, to the west'ard, he seized a British steamer unloading coal, set fire to her and imprisoned the crew. A Dutch steamer towed her out and extinguished the fire, but it was not until the *Vineta* and *Charybdis* had bombarded the Castella that he released the crew.

A hundred and twenty miles up the Orinoco he also had two forts which commanded the navigation channel, and fired on steamers passing to and from the important town of Bolivar, the centre of the revolution.

To prevent this interference with trade, the sloop *Fantome* went up the river and promptly ran aground on a shoal patch within range of these guns. She managed to send news of her predicament by a stern-wheeler coming down the river, and this stern-wheeler was immediately commissioned by our navigating commander (Slayter), with fifty men, to go up the river and tow her off.

The Admiral also sent the "destroyer" *Rocket*, and, in case any "scrapping" made a doctor necessary, I went in her and had a most interesting experience.

Arrived off the Macareo mouth of the delta at noon, we pushed our way across the bar as soon as the lead gave us half a fathom under our keel, throwing up a stern wave three feet or more above the deck. It was the most perfect morning imaginable—calm as a millpond—as we pressed in between the dark forests on either side; the glittering river mouth was flecked with snow-white diver birds, dropping from a great height like arrows, after fish, and hundreds of scarlet paroquets flew across our bows. We increased speed as the water deepened; a bend of the river shut us out from the sea and for seven hours we throbbed up the river as fast as we dared to steam, often almost brushing the branches of the mangrove trees as we hugged the outer curves of the stream. Excited monkeys—large black fellows—flung themselves from branch to branch and from tree to tree with extraordinary agility, trying to keep in view the novel sight of our strange craft.

Venezuelan Troops embarking at La Guaira.

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Only occasionally did we pass small clearings with a few huts and a few copper-coloured, almost naked Caribs staring in wonder, a wonder not shared by their children, naked little urchins who, seeing us coming, paddled out in tiny "dug outs" to be bobbed up and down in the "wash" we left behind.

At sundown—and darkness—we were obliged to anchor until the moon rose; so we tried to tell the *Fantome* we were coming by flashing our searchlight on a cloud in her direction. I believe that I suggested this, having in mind the searchlight signals which used to pass between Kimberley and the Relief Force at Modder River during the Boer War, but forget if the *Fantome* did see it. The light attracted millions of the most ferocious mosquitoes; they swarmed off from the black forest surrounding us; brushed past our faces as we walked along the dark deck, and darkened the white paint in the ward-room. I have never seen so many, and we were thankful when the moon did at last rise above the forest to turn the black water into a broad silver ribbon ahead of us, and we could push on again and leave our little friends to fly away home, as best they could, after their meal—a scanty meal for most of them because there were not enough of us to go "round"!

The next three hours of steaming along the moonlit river, the throbbing of the destroyer, the flames from her funnels (we were burning vile Pocahontas coal) reflected on the silvery bow and stern waves, rippling away until they lost themselves in the black shadows of the forest, made this "run" extraordinarily fascinating, and the knowledge that, sixty miles higher up, the *Fantome* lay in trouble and needed us, supplied the necessary touch of romance and adventure to make this a memorable night.

Pedro, our local pilot, had never been accustomed to more than a sedate eight or nine knots, so that when we sometimes pushed on at fifteen or sixteen, it shook him to the "core".

Off Barancas, a little town at the head of the delta, we slowed down to pass a steamer at anchor and from her a voice hailed us that the *Fantome* had got off the bar. We found her soon after daybreak busy re-embarking the ammunition and stores she had landed in order to lighten herself. Slayter, his fifty men and his stern-wheeler, and a little armed stern-wheeler of Castro's navy, which the *Fantome* had captured, also assisted.

They told us that the forts had not fired for two days, and that they believed they had been captured by the insurgents, so the *Rocket* went up to reconnoitre and found the white insurgent flag flying over both the forts at Castilia—two mediæval looking castellas perched on the tops of two small hills. Taking Pedro along with us, the first Lieutenant of the *Ariadne* and myself landed and climbed up to the lower fort to interview the Insurgent Commandant, a fine pure-bred Venezuelan, who received us very courteously but regretted that he could not even offer us coffee, as supplies had run out. Half a dozen ragged little native half-castes hurried to form the semblance of a guard of honour, picking up their rifles and standing awkwardly in a row at the stone gateway. They resembled the Filipino insurgents to a remarkable extent, but were even more tattered and dilapidated, a broad sombrero grass hat, a torn vest and a pair of ragged cotton "shorts" completed their dress and flour bags—with the name of the American firm still showing on them—slung by string from their shoulders, held their ammunition and completed their equipment. Few of them had slings to their rusty rifles, and some of these had not even bolts; all of them, however, carried long machetes.

Inside this mediæval fort or "castella", built by that same wonderful generation of Spaniards who had built the intramuros at Manila, were a few old muzzle-loading carronades on wooden carriages—some of which had crumbled beneath them—and also an oil search-light of American manufacture. Skulls and horns of oxen, bones, rags, broken utensils and battered kerosene tins littered both the inside and outside of the fort; everything and everybody bore an air of extreme melancholy and disorder.

With Pedro's assistance the Commandant, emaciated and almost too feeble to stand, told us the story of the capture and the long weary weeks of investment. They had cut off all supplies to the forts from land, but the little stern-wheeler we had seen alongside the *Fantome* had brought supplies by river, raiding the villages on the banks, and had made it impossible to starve the garrison into surrender until she had been captured, four days ago.

Most of the insurgent besieging force had gone back to Bolivar, taking the prisoners dragging back a modern field-gun, the gun that had fired on the *Fantome* and passing shipping, and leaving him and his handful of men to hold the position.

"He was very ill; all his men were very ill; fever —very bad—no medicine—no food", he told us, and they certainly looked ill and half starved.

Thinking that there might still be prisoners in the fort, and that if we saw them it might be to their advantage, we made Pedro ask him.

"Yes," he thought there were some and would show them to us.

But he did not quite know where they were; led us feebly from one wretched store-house to another, and finally did find them, throwing the wide broken-down door open—two wretched fellows lying stark naked on a brick floor, one dead and the other evidently dying—at the last gasp. He shrugged his shoulders when he saw our look of indignation, and hurriedly talked to Pedro.

"No doctor—no medicine—all very ill—prisoners —everybody—fever—much fever—all have fever"— and hastily closing the door on this unpleasant spectacle led us away.

We did not climb up to the upper fort; we had had quite enough of this one so wished the Commandant good-bye; he bowed us out of the fort and we ran down in the *Rocket*, abreast the *Fantome*.

That afternoon three of us landed to shoot duck in a neighbouring lagoon, but only fired a few shots (No. 5) at a caiman who would follow us at the water's edge until we realised that he enjoyed the "tickling" sensation and only followed us for "more". He sheered off when we refused to humour him, and we fled from the clouds of vicious mosquitoes humming round us. By the time we had pulled up stream to the *Rocket* it was dark and the *Fantome* had got all her ammunition and stores on board again, but had lost a man overboard. Slipping between her and the big stern-wheeler alongside, the rapid current had sucked him underneath and his body was never seen again.

I slept that night on board the big stern-wheeler and had a shower-bath aboard the captured Venezuelan gunboat—for which I blessed Castro— before the *Rocket* started down stream again at 3 a.m. on Christmas day.

The previous day, when passing Barancas we had, in anticipation of the morrow Christmas, stopped and bought, ashore, some "beef" for the crew, a live turkey and some eggs for ourselves and also a parrot!

Barancas must have been a miserable little place at the best of times: now, the whole of the river front of it showed gaps made by shell wantonly fired by Castro's gunboats whenever they happened to pass and have a few rounds to spare.

While waiting for our Christmas dinner to come off, we watched a lady, dressed in a scarlet dressing-gown "affair", come down from the town along the river bank to a little semicircle of stakes at the edge of the river, abreast the ship. A negress, in an ultramarine flowing gown, bearing a tall earthenware jar on her head, followed her, and when her mistress stepped into the semicircle of stakes, filled her jar several times and poured it over her—scarlet gown and all.

Three of us stood watching this bath of Venus, and though none of us was of a particularly scriptural disposition, we were all struck by the extraordinary resemblance to those old vividly-coloured Sunday-school picture books of our youth. We were not the only spectators, for several caimans (alligators) looked on hungrily from without those stakes.

On our way back to Trinidad we steamed at sixteen knots with a three knot current, passed our young friends in their dug-outs, tumbled a good many of them over, to their huge delight, met our paroquets and diving birds, and literally wormed our way through the sand bar at the mouth into the open sea.

Once out in deep water we sat down to our Christmas dinner—the Barancas turkey, hard as nails—some sweet potatoes and then the *pièce de resistance*, whose coming had been carefully concealed from us by the stoker cook, a "spotted-dog" pudding, which he brought down the steep ladder—blazing furiously.

The sight of it warmed the cockles of our hearts, but the alluring flames were those of methylated spirit (!) with which it had been thoroughly saturated.

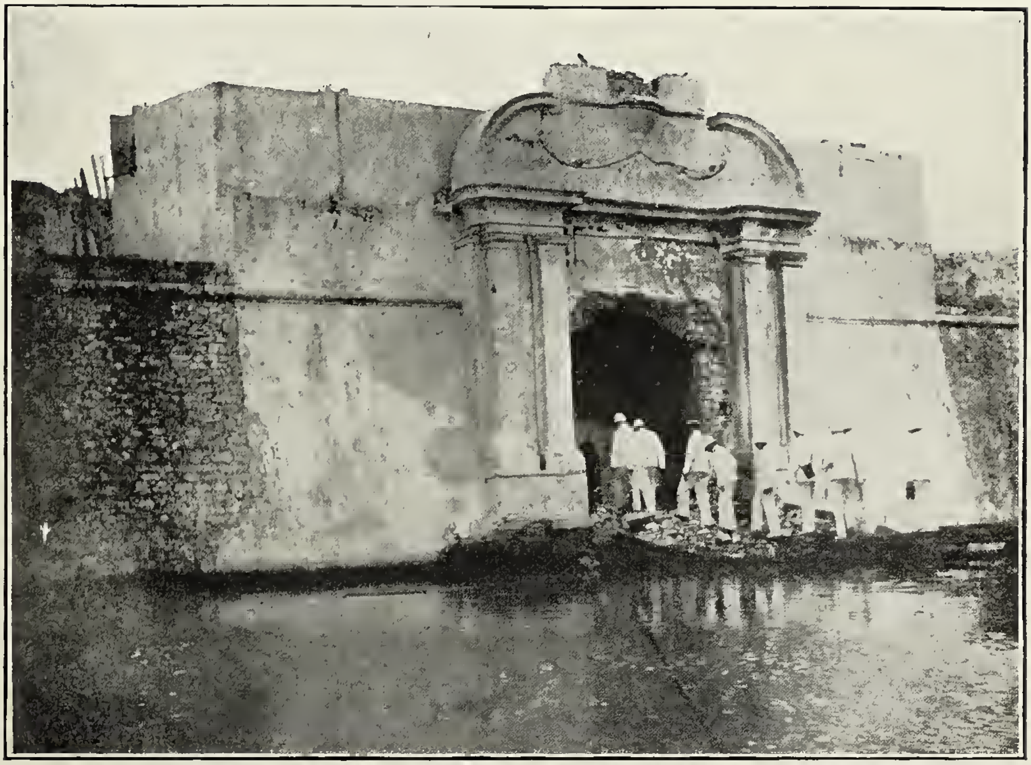
When the faithful stoker, flushed with pleasure at having provided this unexpected treat for us had disappeared, we threw our helpings through the scuttles and tried to get the flavour out of our mouths with tobacco.

I have never spent such an interesting Christmas day as this, even if I have never had such an unsatisfactory Christmas dinner.

A fortnight later, the *Ariadne* went off along the coast with supplies and mails for the blockading cruisers and their manned prizes. The prize crews were having a most uncomfortable time of it, the little ships being disgustingly filthy, as can be understood when one remembers that in one cabin, on board the "flagship" *Bolivar*, an officer had kept half a dozen hens roosting on the edge of his bunk!

At Puerto Cabello the officers of the *Vineta* showed us round the bombarded Castella—a handsome stone structure in the most extreme disorder inside. It had been much used for many years as a political prison, and we explored the dungeons, with their chains, leg irons and arm irons, with much zest, the finding of a human skeleton in one of them adding to our interest. To assuage the discomfort of the poor devils there was quite a pretty little chapel where, no doubt, the priests extolled the virtues and tolerations of the Government which happened to be in power. We took off with us a great deal of useless loot—rifles, leg irons, even three little bronze guns and a half demented cat, suffering acutely from shell shock.

Wishing our *Vineta* friends good-bye, we paid a visit to Wilhelmstad, in Curaçoa, steaming through the town, up what might have been its main street, anchoring in the lagoon in its rear, paying and receiving official calls and steaming through the town again to sea.



Puerto Cabello after Bombardment.
Officers of "Vineta" showing officers of "Ariadne" over the battered "Castella."

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Like all other Dutch towns, it looked spotlessly clean; and the polite inhabitants on the side walks took their hats off and bowed and the quaint looking "toy" soldiers on the ramparts of the square forts presented arms as we passed. It was quite a novel and interesting little visit slightly marred by the disappointing results of our purchase of "genuine" Curaçoa which turned out to be a sickly kind of orange syrup and not the liqueur we anticipated. However, I disposed of my bottle to Miss Arabella de Montmorency, my black washer-lady at Trinidad, and she hugged it enthusiastically to her ample bosom, easily concealing it there lest any "black trash" should despoil her on the way home.

At la Quaira we learned from two American newspaper correspondents that Castro had given the U.S. Minister (Bowen) a free hand to settle all points in dispute.

This really ended the blockade; we handed back his fleet to Castro, and subsequent events interested us no more, although I often wondered what became of my Commandant friend in that fever-stricken castella.

Meanwhile the *Rocket* made another journey up the Orinoco as far as Bolivar itself, and Mornement, the junior Surgeon—Long John, the cricketer—brought back a little Puma cub, captured when its mother had been killed a few days before. Poor little starved thing, he could scarcely stand when brought on board and Mornement and I nursed him to life with milk and butter and drops of brandy. Eventually he grew into a fine animal more than five feet long from tip of nose to end of tail, and never until his death, eighteen months later, did he show the least vice, although he had certain little jovialities which had to be discouraged—such as springing at the black washerwomen's skirts when they came aboard, or hiding behind a bulkhead and clawing at the bluejackets' bare feet as they went by.

Poor old de Lamos—that was his name on the ship's books—always set a good example of sobriety to Nelly-the-Deer, and Billy-the-Goat; Nelly, who looked so gentle and guileless, Billy, who looked the sinner he was—both of them confirmed drunkards, always first in attendance when the grog bugle sounded and the Master-at-arms issued the rum ration. Nelly used to know when she had had enough, and would retire into a warm corner and sleep off her potations, but Billy's libations used to make him boisterous and quarrelsome. Once he broke a leg in his bacchanalian capers, but in spite of it being put in a splint and strapped to his body, always managed to hobble aft directly he heard the welcome bugle.

After the Venezuelan " show ", we cruised through the West Indies playing cricket matches against the various island teams—surely the most enthusiastic cricket lovers in the world. " Long John " became the idol of the niggers; the way he banged their bowling to the boundary roused their wildest enthusiasm, and his medium-paced balls, just clear of their off stumps, with an occasional break to the off, puzzled them tremendously, used as they were to facing whirlwind bowling, without brains or method behind it. They waited for him to come ashore, they crowded to the match, and shouted and jumped about when he made one of his big drives and followed him down to the boat afterwards in great excitement.

St. Pierre, in Martinique, had been destroyed by the eruption of Mt. Pelée, ten months previously, and at Granada we heard stories of those three days of pitch darkness, falling lava dust, the trembling of the island, the bubbling of the lava at the top of their own peak, and of that awesome pillar of fire, away to the north, from Mt. Pelée itself. The niggers all believed that the end of the world had come—and not without reason; many of the English thought so, too.

We passed close abreast St. Pierre, close enough to see the horrible desolation of the ruined town, the tomb of 40,000 inhabitants, killed instantaneously as that white-hot cloud of carbon monoxide gas rolled over them. We could trace the course of this cloud down the now clear cut slopes of Mt. Pelée (still smoking) towards the doomed town, and could see places where it had poured over the edges of precipitous rocks like a waterfall, charring the tops of the trees growing from the rocks, but leaving the leaves on their lower branches untouched. It made a most impressive and desolate sight.

We also visited Havana and anchored close to the wreck of the U.S. Battleship *Maine*, a tattered mass of twisted iron, hung with hundreds of melancholy memorial wreaths, and with the Stars and Stripes, and a pendant, still flying above her. Five years had elapsed since the explosion which sank her and precipitated the Spanish-American war, but no one knew, even then, whether the magazines had blown up as a result of an internal explosion or not. Both Governments had already made superficial examinations; the Spaniards averred that a defect in the magazines had destroyed her; the United States gave not very convincing proof that an external explosion had caused the disaster; but both evidently felt uneasy lest any really exhaustive inquiry and examination should definitely prove their own theory wrong. In Havana Clubs, Spanish, American, and British, the cause was still hotly contested; we were told that some young Spanish officers, whose names were well known, had placed a mine under her, connected it to the shore and fired it; we were told, on just as good authority, that the Spaniards did not possess the material to construct a suitable mine for the purpose, and by others, with still more conviction, that it had been the work of Cuban revolutionists who sought, by this means, to force the United States to intervene.

Anyhow, there she lay, and as the explosion of her magazines did destroy her, the ordinary person imagined that the destruction, then wrought, would effectually conceal any damage caused by a mine and render any hypothesis of external explosion purely conjectural, however formulated to suit political requirements.

She and her melancholy garlands have since been removed.

Havana impressed us all tremendously—especially its exorbitant charges—and the English residents told us that, in addition to the cost of living, everything else had made wonderful strides since the American occupation. It certainly looked clean.

As the guests of the British Community, we were given much entertainment, including a " ball " and a " gala ", at Jai Alai, where we saw, most of us for the first time, several partidos of pelota played by imported professionals. The wonderful rallies caused intense enthusiasm among an excited audience and among ourselves, although we did not conform to the local custom of throwing our hats into the "court". Several of us tried—unsuccessfully—to persuade the professionals to give us a lesson. They told us that General Leonard Wood used to play every morning when he was Governor of Cuba; but would not allow us to follow his admirable example.

On all sides we heard of Leonard Wood, the one man who had made a reputation during that extraordinarily bungled Spanish-American war and added to it afterwards. What a career he had had—

Surgeon of Roosevelt's Rough Riders outside Santiago—Medical Officer of Health of Santiago—swept the town clear of yellow fever—Governor of Santiago—Governor of Havana—cleared that city of yellow fever—Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of Cuba—three years of such power—then reverted to the rank of Surgeon—from Surgeon promoted to Lieutenant-General in the Line—no wonder "that every shako of the West Pointers shook with indignation", as a contemporary army newspaper had it. Resting for a few years, while things went from bad to worse in the Philippines and his friend Roosevelt had gone out of power, he was sent out as Governor of those islands, the graveyard of so many reputations, with a "now we will see what Roosevelt's marvel can do!" In three years he had pacified the islands and confounded his political enemies, who sent two of the finest U.S. cruisers to bring him home at the expiration of his term of office!

We paid several more visits to Trinidad during the commission, and from the Governor and his wife down to the latest recruit in the various merchants' offices all helped to give us a royal time, and filled our days with football, cricket, hockey and tennis matches, riding and bathing parties and our nights with dinners and dancing.

I rode frequently there, and the Sunday bathing parties—six or seven of us on horseback riding some ten miles out of the town—were a great institution, which our horses used to enjoy as much as we did. One morning, while our customary party splashed gaily in the water among the horses—miles from any human habitation—a nigger police-constable rode on the beach, dismounted abreast us, between us and our heaps of clothes and saddles, hitched his horse to a tree and squatted stolidly.

I thought nothing of this until one of the party—a shore-goer—pointed out that by some insane local regulation no one was allowed to bathe anywhere in the island without a bathing dress. I forget how much was the fine for breaking the law—and all but two of us *had* broken it—but it meant a visit to the police court for four of us or squaring the damned nigger. He had only followed us to be "squared", and would certainly summon four of us if he was not. We preferred to be so summoned and fined rather than bribe the brute, so stayed in the water swimming about or standing up to our necks, for another half hour or more, hoping that he would presently tire and ride away.

Not a bit of it; he evidently meant to have his bribe or his summons.

Then a bright thought came and the two who had not broken the law went ashore; one wrapped himself in his towel while the other returned with his discarded bathing dress; one of the scoundrelly law breakers put it on, was escorted past the policeman—and that one bathing dress brought us all ashore in safety—one after the other—much to our amusement and the disgust of the nigger who mounted his horse and rode sulkily away.

The cocoa plantations of Trinidad were then worked by Indians under very strict supervision, both from the Indian and local Governments. In Trinidad, the Protector of the Indians had the task of supervising their welfare in the various plantations and acting as their friend, intermediary, and adviser on all matters.

I often rode with Mr. Warner, who held this position, and saw many interesting side-lights on the intimate life of these singularly attractive people. I remember, one day, as we rode through a large plantation, we came across a well-kept hut, with an unusually clean little compound, nestling in the shade of some "upper-cover" trees. On a mat, in the sun, a very old man contentedly smoked his pipe, and either side of the large heap of cocoa pods an extremely handsome, magnificently developed young Indian and a prepossessing young woman squatted and winnowed the heap in front of them with palm leaves.

As we came abreast, the girl saw us, jumped to her feet and came out, drawing from the folds of her sari a document which she held out to my friend. He took it, read it gravely and handed it back to her; she salaamed with much jingling of bracelets and anklets and we rode on.

"Well! that's an idyllic little scene?" I suggested, quite enthusiastically.

"Tell me what you make of it?" he asked.

I told him that there could not be much doubt—a happy young married couple—much devoted to each other—both young and good-looking—prosperous in their simple way and taking care of the old man—the girl's father probably—making the old gentleman comfortable in the sun—supplying him with tobacco—looking after him in his declining years. "A most idyllic scene" I repeated, "no wonder these people come over from India."

He had tested my powers of observation several times that morning and I had failed badly, but this time felt on safe ground. I had made the very worst blunder of all.

The girl was, or thought she was, the wife of the old man; the two young people were lovers, only waiting for the old man to die to marry each other and enjoy his money; the document she had brought was the old man's will; she believed that it gave her everything, but it did not, he had another wife, a legal wife, in Port of Spain, and had left everything to that one!

CHAPTER XI

1903-1905

Changes in the Navy—Reduction of the Station—Russo-Japanese War—La Quaira—A Grand Ball—An Interrupted Flirtation—The "Shah" and the "Huascar"—The Poodle and the Hen—Messmates—Gunnery—Accompany the "Cod-bangers" to Newfoundland—Wedged in an Iceflow—Thirty Starving Housemaids—Return to England—Rejoin "Ariadne"—The Russian Baltic Fleet—Pay Off "Ariadne".

THE year 1903 saw some changes introduced into the Navy which are interesting to recall. At the commencement of the year the Admiralty promulgated the "Selborne Scheme" for the unification of entry of marine, executive and engineer officers. Scarcely had old-fashioned notions recovered from this dastardly suggestion before they received an even greater shock, in April, when Engineer Officers were given compound semi-executive titles, and became engineer-lieutenants, engineer-commanders, etc., the fore-runner of many similar changes in subsequent years; changes which certainly were not universally appreciated, even by those on whom they were forced.

A radical change also took place in the outward appearance of the Royal Navy. Yellow masts, yards and funnels, white boats, cowls and upper works, gleaming black sides with their striped belts of white or green, disappeared; and from truck to waterline every ship (except those in the tropics) had now to be painted the universal grey. Ships lost their individuality to such an extent that those of the same class had to be distinguished by varying black or red bands round their funnels.

In the same year the Admiralty discontinued the old unsatisfactory system of naval band-ratings, with their displeasing blue uniforms and their haphazard knowledge of the instruments they tried to blow, scrape or bang. They turned them over to the Royal Marines' School of Music, gave them a smart Marine's uniform, and also a musical training before they went to sea—a most brilliant idea the last. This resulted in the gradual disappearance of the many Maltese "musicians" who had previously solaced our idle moments with their "strings", stirred our martial ardour with their "brass", or more often than not, infuriated us with both.

In 1904 the Canadian Government took over Halifax Dockyard, lock, stock and barrel, and the Admiralty later on lent the cruiser *Niobe* to give it something to do and to form the nucleus of a future Canadian Navy. In March, 1905, the picturesque little dockyard at Jamaica was closed, and its dockyard tug towed up to Bermuda. For long it had done nothing but keep in repair that tug and the two steam launches which maintained communication between Kingston and Port Royal; but it held so many memories of British and French rivalry in the old sailing days and of Nelson's rapid rise to Post Captain's rank at the almost unbelievable age of twenty, that with it disappeared an interesting landmark of Naval History.

Our own Squadron gradually dwindled, until at the end of 1904 it was abolished altogether and replaced by a Training Squadron based on England.

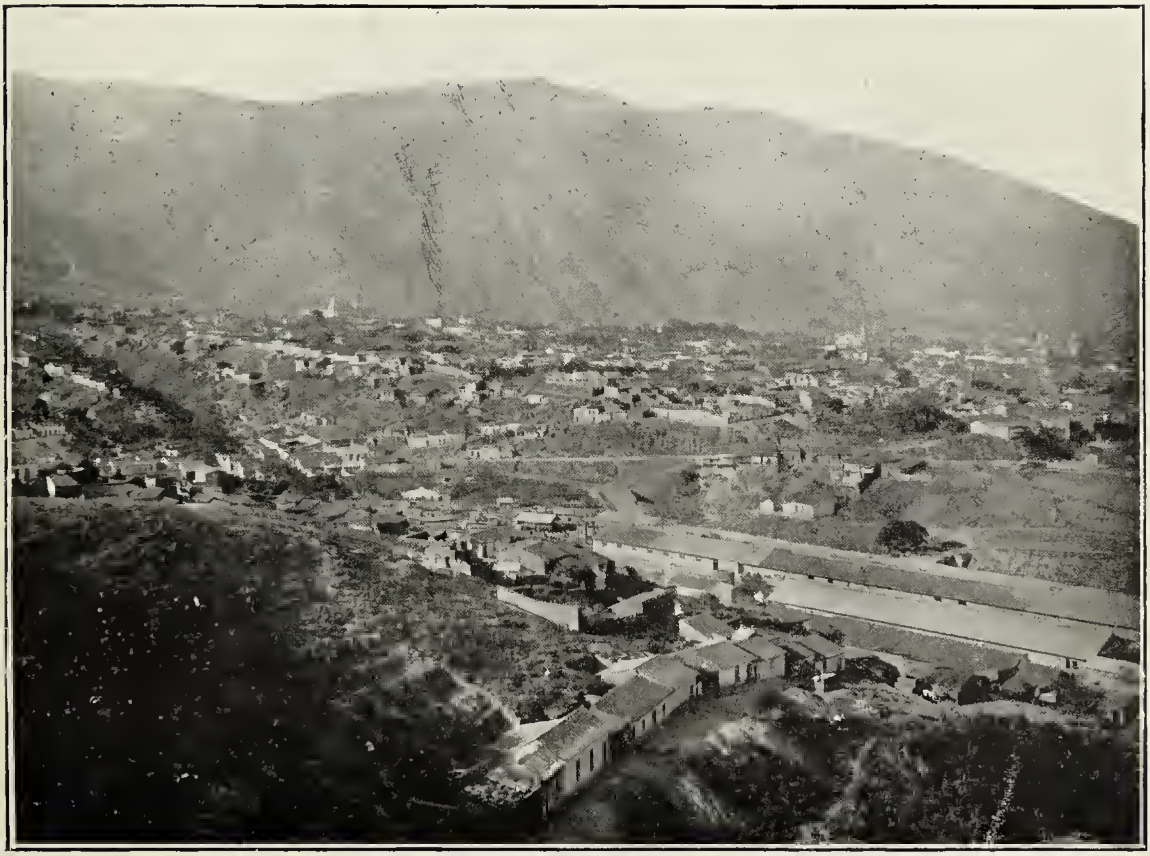
In February of that year the *Ariadne* was lying off Trinidad when the news arrived of the Japanese

Torpedo attack on Port Arthur; and the little nigger paper-boys ran along the streets shouting and waving the fly sheets which bore the startling telegram.

This news caused the greater sensation and discussion because we understood that the attack preceded a Declaration of War. Later, we learned that on that fatal night Admiral Starck, commanding the Russian Fleet, was giving a "ball" on shore, and that the Viceroy, Admiral Alexieff, who attended it, had actually received information of the declaration of war, but kept the knowledge to himself "so as not to spoil the party"—quite in accordance with the prevailing obsession that the "monkeys"—as they called their opponents—were scarcely worth a thought.

Knowing Port Arthur and much of the characteristics of the Russian naval officer I could picture very vividly, the unreadiness, inefficiency and hopeless confusion that night.

This war did not yet affect us or our programme of social engagements. A week later the *Ariadne* anchored once more off La Quaira and we went up the "steepest adhesion" railway in the world to a ball given, at the Caracas Club, by the British residents. It turned out to be a grand affair in spite of the absence of President Castro, that peppery little gentleman refusing to attend because the Admiral had not called on him, and he still felt "cross" with all of us. However, the Admiral and very many officers went, some of the latter hoping to renew their year-old flirtations with the Venezuelan ladies they had met at Trinidad during the Revolution. They did not; in fact, they received the "cold eye" and the "frozen mit" from those wary damsels, whose own cavaliers, dashing young Venezuelan officers, now appeared on the scene and enforced strict proprietorship. One of our gallant



Caracas, Venezuela, 1904.

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Marines did manage to lure his Lady-of-the-Past to a table and an iced drink, but their sweet dalliance was somewhat interrupted by a Venezuelan cavalry officer striding up in fury, drawing a revolver, banging the table with it and announcing excitedly, "You English can dance; we Venezuelans can shoot!"

It is really impossible to make love satisfactorily, under such conditions—even a Royal Marine gets bunkered sometimes!

Chatting to our hosts about last year's blockade we took it rather too much for granted that they would overflow with gratitude.

"You must have been pleased to see us come along, last year?" we suggested and turned the conversation into other channels when they replied, ruefully: "Well, p'raps we were; at any rate, Castro shoved us all in jail!"

Another enthusiastic visit to Havana, and a peep at beautiful little Nassau in the Bahamas, and once more we went back to Bermuda and alongside the hulk "*Shah*", to fill up with coal. This old broadside-battery cruiser, still graceful in her old age and humble lot, had fought the Peruvian ironclad *Huascar* nearly thirty years ago. I once met an old warrant officer who served in her during the engagement as quartermaster at the wheel. His account of the action may have been dimmed by time but had lost nothing of picturesque detail. He still glowed at the memory of the wonderful way the Captain had handled her.

"The Cap'n; 'e was a standing along of me, a won'nerful man 'e was, sir; an' 'e sees the *Uascar* letting off one of 'er big guns and we sees the lump of shell comin' along, an' 'e says to Bill Magrath, at the engine room telegraph, 'Full speed astern!" and full speed astern we goes, an' that 'ere shell plumps into the water a'ead of us. Another time 'e see'd one comin' along, sang out 'full speed a'head!' and, Lor' bless you, sir! that big 'un just took off the life buoy 'anging on the stern walk. This 'oppin' about riled them Peri-uvians so they began a 'lettin'' off two shell at a time, 'opin' to catch us with one, whatever the Cap'n did. Think that worrited the Cap'n? Not a bit of it, sir. 'E turns to me, as we watches 'em coming along and says to me quiet-like, like a babe unborn, ''ard a' star'b'd, quartermaster'.

"I puts 'er over and round she comes, facing 'em and believe me or believe me not, we pushed in between 'em two shells, one on one side and one on t'other. Ah, sir! but them splashes did wet the hammocks nettings—wet 'em cruel!"

I gathered from him that the *Huascar* eventually tired of firing at such an elusive ship and retired up a river. At any rate, my informant gave me to understand that she did, and that at night the *Shah's* steamboat, fitted with outrigger torpedo, was sent up the river to try and sink her. He went as coxswain of the boat—or said he did—and still thrilled at the memory of the exploit.

"We pushed 'er along, sir, up that 'ere river, with that 'ere outrigger boom back in the stern sheets and its gun-cotton 'ead all fixed, t'other end, proper like; crawled along till the Lootenant says to me in a whisper, 'There she is, coxswain, go slow!' an' I sees a dark ship a'head; goes crawling softly, softly, under her stern and we shoved out that 'ere outrigger. Just as us was a'going to buzz if off, a 'ead shows over the side, above us, and sings out, ''ere! what the bloody 'ell are you a doing of?' an' it turned out she were a Britisher.

"'E told us the *Uascar* was further up stream so we shoved off, found 'er—not a light showing, not a soul stirring—went alongside, launched that 'ere outrigger ag'in 'er side, well under the water line an' the Lootenant sings out—all of a jump 'e was—'Fire!' The man with the firin'-key 'e bangs it down as I stands by to go astern—an' nothin' 'appened! 'e bangs it down again an' nothin' 'appens so the Lootenant, 'e 'as a look with the lantern, and—damn my eyes, sir!—we 'adn't brought no battery along of us, and couldn't fire the damned thing if we'd stayed bangin' that firin'-key till Christmas.

"What with the Lootenant's langwidge and that 'ere light, the Perry-uvians was beginning to run about, up topsides, and get a bit curious like, so the Lootenant tells me to 'ook it—and I 'ooked it."

This was his yarn as told me, and if not true it certainly was amusing.

At the end of 1904, the "Dogger Bank" incident of the sinking of trawlers by the wretched, ill-fated Baltic Fleet made itself felt on our station; we prepared for war, and sent home the crews of several of the smaller ships. Things quieted down after a few days and we carried on as usual, but with a new Admiral, staff and Family.

At that time I could never understand why a Commander-in-Chief should bring his family to a distant station and allow them to live on board his Flagship, even though for short periods only. However delightful the family, the natural and inevitable result is that they do interfere with the normal life of the Flagship, herself, and very frequently with her movements.

A Commander-in-Chief, whether he is merely the Figure Head of his Secretary and Flag Captain, or the most brilliant and despotic ruler of his Squadron, is placed on a pedestal very far above all others, as the source of all authority, an authority vested with extraordinary power to affect the lives of those under his command. If he moves about a harbour, with his flag flying, guards fall in and present arms, bugles are blown, ships are stilled to silence and attention; even if he goes ashore in plain clothes, buglers dash aft and sound the "still", and everyone on deck stands rigidly to attention until he passes; in every conceivable manner is his authority rightly so maintained and made manifest. Yet he often brings out a family, lugs them round after him, here, there and everywhere; and their continual presence undoubtedly does lower the prestige of his position and the respect of those he commands.

I often wondered in my old bachelor days, why these things should be. But now, of course, I am wiser and know that the officers and men of the Squadron were right when they realised that though their Commander-in-Chief was still their titular Chief, one greater than He there was; and one whom he had to obey.

A little yarn which went the "rounds", illustrates this "sub-conscious" feeling. One morning, the Admiral inspected a small cruiser and gave the impression that he was anything but pleased with what he had seen and the manner in which evolutions had been performed. The Skipper of that ship was plunged into the depths of despair, but bethought him that a cup of tea at Admiralty House, and a nice little chat with the Family, would probably put matters right—soften the Inspection Report, anyway. So, in the afternoon up he went, taking along with him his pet poodle for the Family to caress and make much of. However, the pet poodle disappeared during the course of tea and the nice little chat, and presently returning, laid at the feet of the Family, with every manifestation of delight, the Family pet bantam hen—stone dead!

I am quite sure that if the Inspection Report was not mollified he still blames that poor little hen.

Life on board this Flagship with her sixty Wardroom and Gunroom Officers, differed considerably from that aboard the old *Immortalité*, with her bluff Skipper. In her we plunged occasionally into short spasms of social gaiety, generally mere "dogsbodies" in the presence of one, if not two, Flagships; but our chief preoccupation was to get away to some lonely place where we could fish and shoot to our heart's content. In the *Ariadne*, we really had no respite from the social duties on a Station famed for its hospitalities; and the social prestige of the "Flag" had always to be maintained through those three swiftly-passing years.

We really did live at high pressure, and the older members of the "mess" plunged into the "vortex" with as much energy and enthusiasm as the youngest. Our Paymaster—Fleet Paymaster W. G. E. Penfold—"the wicked old sinner"—known all over the Station and the Service as William George Edward—was always first and foremost in any adventure, ably seconded by Bill Slayter, the Navigator, and later on by our second Flag-Lieutenant, Kennard. In every "rough and tumble" our Irish Chaplain would be found in the thick of it, and the delightful Major of Marines—R. M. Byne—and the Fleet Surgeon, W. H. Norman,* could always be relied upon at an "At Home" on board or ashore to give a "tone" to the show, however much it "dragged". As for the rest of us, the difficulty lay in keeping in mind the homely motto "Duty before Pleasure", and arranging the one—which one, I forget—to interfere as little as possible with the other.

This ship differed in one very great respect from all others I have since served in; generally speaking,

*Surgeon Vice-Admiral Sir William Norman, K.C.B.

the senior members of a mess—the "three stripers", the "S.O.B.s"†—curb very emphatically sometimes the exuberance of the younger and presumably more frivolous members. In the *Ariadne* they encouraged, even if they did not lead them, and so prevented those differences of opinion which often mar the harmony of ward-room existence; and contributed enormously to make the commission a pleasant one.

Among those on board who lost their lives in the Great War, were the Flag-Lieutenant France-Hayhurst, Valentine Gibbs, killed at Zeebrugge—a very gallant fellow—and Peter Willoughby, surely one of the most delightful midshipmen in the Service, who went down in the *Good Hope*.

The *Ariadne* also differed from the *Immortalité* in the matter of "gunnery". In the old ship the Gunnery Lieutenant had no friends; everyone except himself, his gunner and their myrmidons, looked upon the guns as a necessary evil only redeemed by the fact that their breech-blocks and mountings made splendid ornaments to be kept highly polished, with an extra rub for Sunday "divisions". If he suggested a nice little day under way, steaming round and round a small target "piffing" with his cannon-tubes, we disliked him intensely; when we had to carry out the routine firings of the year we thought him a low fellow and hated him accordingly. Here in the *Ariadne* we had an Admiral, Flag Captain and Commander who *had* been gunnery experts, a First Lieutenant who *was* one—a most rabid one—and several of the watch-keepers who aspired to be. Also Percy Scott had by this time so revolutionised the "gunnery" of the Service that it was only by unrelaxing efforts that his wonderful results in the *Scylla* could be maintained. So with all the gunnery talent in high places, no wonder that throughout the commission the "Loader" banged and rattled and thumped, and various forms of "Dotter" drill went on continuously. With all that talent on board one had to succumb to the delights of cannon-tube, group-firing and directional broadside-firing even if it did mean eight hours at sea, half an hour's "piffing" and a couple of hours rescuing a target and the towing picket-boat with a hawser round its screw—as not infrequently happened, because we generally had bad luck with the weather. And when the actual prize-firing practices came along we were all so worked up by the prospect of emulating—if not beating—other ships' records, and also by the knowledge that once the fuss and turmoil had concluded, comparative peace would reign again, that we underwent the sufferings with comparative lightness of heart. In 1903 one of our 6-inch guns, manned by "blue" marines, won the record "black-birding" shoot for the year, beating every other 6-inch in the Navy with their score of nineteen rounds and seventeen hits in two minutes. There was not the least doubt about those seventeen holes in the canvas, and that record stood until a battleship in the Mediterranean beat it during the following year.

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†Silly Old Buffers. (Polite rendering)

Towards the end of the Commission we had to send back to their homes more than a hundred Newfoundland fishermen, Naval Reservists undergoing training. Owing to a severe epidemic of influenza in the Fleet it was thought necessary for a doctor to travel with them, and I accompanied them in the *Orinoco*, a small Pickford and Black steamer, from Bermuda to Halifax and then to St. John's.

We had quite an adventurous voyage to Halifax in a ship totally unsuited for heavy weather, were hove to for a couple of days in a heavy gale and subsequently fog-bound off the Nova Scotian coast.

Among the passengers was a poor demented priest on his way, under escort, to an asylum in Quebec. He would persist in following about the rather pretty stewardess, playing an imaginary violin and singing little French chansonettes: fortunately she did not understand French. He was pitiable in his harmlessness, but she could not get rid of him until she pretended that she wanted one of the saloon pictures copied; afterwards, through all the tumble and tossing—which were great—the poor fellow slaved at this task from morning to night; and she escaped him and his love songs.

The ship carried molasses, into which the sea found its way and made a most disgusting smell; even the hardy Newfoundlanders could not "stick it", and if a "codbanger's" nose rebels it must be very bad indeed. Queer fellows these men, with their great muscular bodies and their simple, childish brains. E. C. Compton, the Lieutenant in charge of the party, asked them one day to judge the weight of a three-inch shell. They had no idea whatever; they picked it up, balanced it, passed it from one to another—no result; their brains would not work.

"Shut your eyes, think of it as a cod," he told them and the answer came back in a flash, "som'at over eleven poonds."

Poor fellows! one could take even money that if they did not die of drowning or by losing themselves in their dorys in a fog-belt on the cod banks, they were certain to die of consumption; with all their grand physique they could not resist tubercular infection.

We arrived in Halifax early in April, and found the solid heaped-up snow at the sides of Barrington Street so high that when walking on the side walks one could see only the tops of passing trams. Compton and I had nothing but semi-tropical clothes, not an overcoat between us, and coming from the heat of Bermudas felt the cold keenly, especially on the tedious railway journey to Sydney, Cape Breton, and the crunching through the drift ice across the Gut of Canso in the big ferry. The Straits of Newfoundland were thick with pack ice, but a swell kept it in motion and allowed our steamer, the *Bruce*, specially constructed for the job, to push her way through it. This was my first experience of ice, and under a bright sun it had a very exhilarating effect. It had not quite such an exhilarating effect when Compton and I, having safely deposited our Codbangers aboard H.M.S. *Calypso*, started back again. When we entered that bleak harbour of St. John's, the big hummocks and bergs were drifting gently southwards past the entrance, glittering in the sunshine; but during the day a south-westerly gale sprang up, and when we left it they were hurrying back again and the *Bruce*, with her bows stiffened with forty tons of concrete, did not like the head sea she met. She did a great deal of dodging before she turned up through the Straits and found the pack ice so closely wedged together there that for two days we could make but little headway through it. The novel sensation of butting a big floe, sliding up its edge until those forty tons of cement made it give way, seeing the ice cracks darting along the surface away from the stem with noises like rifle shots, and watching the seething turmoil beneath our bows as the tumbling, swirling blocks of ice came up again to the surface, kept us on the fo'cs'tle for hours at a time. It was not so pleasant, aft, to hear and feel the special steel-bronze propeller come up "all standing" with a trembling of the whole ship which to us—unused to this—seemed so ominous of danger.

Strangest of all was the necessity of keeping our scuttles shut to prevent fragments of ice falling through on to our bunks and the darkening of the cabin as the heaped up masses scraped past.

The only other passengers were thirty girls, migrating to New York as domestic servants. They were expected to be seasick for the whole voyage of thirty-six hours, in normal times, so the Association which organised their journey had not paid for any food while on board. Their expectations of seasickness during the first few hours had been most thoroughly realised; but after the steamer had been for twenty-four hours almost motionless in the ice they began to grow restless; another twelve hours and Compton and I learned the cause—they were famishing, and had not a dollar between them. We made a fuss about this, and eventually the whole crowd of starving housemaids stuffed themselves to their hearts' content—a joyful sight—especially when Compton and I, who thought that we should have to "ante up" for this gargantuan tea-party, supper-party and dinner-party combined, were told that the company would do so.

From Halifax we took passage for Liverpool in the *Virginian*. She was the first turbine ship to cross the Atlantic, and this was her maiden trip, so being tremendously interested, I spent a great deal of time in her turbine-rooms and learned all that I could. First-hand knowledge is always useful, and two years later, when I commissioned a newly-built turbine cruiser, I was able to give the Engineer-Commander many very valuable "tips" which he accepted so gratefully that I would have instructed him much more fully had he not informed me—very gently and kindly—that he happened to be the Admiralty Turbine Expert! My remembrance of this incident is somewhat cloudy now, but I believe that if Parsons hadn't pushed into the Patent Office in front of him, very rudely and hurriedly, without even saying "excuse me", while he was paying off an irate hansom-cab driver, outside, his own designs would have knocked Parsons into a cocked hat. At any rate, I did not waste any more valuable time on him!

We rejoined the *Ariadne*—which had in the meantime arrived in England from Bermuda—and after three months "pottering about" steamed out of Portland for Plymouth, with our paying-off pendant and its gilt bladder streaming gaily astern and our band braying "For Auld Lang Syne" for all it was worth. But instead of the customary manning of ships and customary rounds of cheering, only an occasional head poked itself over the sides of the Atlantic Fleet battleships, as we swept proudly through their lines, and yawned at us, wondering who we were and why the devil we were making so much noise!

When we did pay off only seven of the original ward-room officers remained, and only one midshipman, who reported "all midshipmen present" when the midshipmen's "call" sounded for the last time.

In so tame a fashion ended our hectic commission.

Only one event of interest marked that period of our decline—the return of the *Vengeance*, *Albion*, *Ocean* and *Centurion* from the China Station, where they were no longer needed since the Russian Baltic Fleet had been destroyed in the Straits of Tsushima, at the end of May, and now that the Japanese-English treaty had been signed.

For more than seven months and a half that ill-assorted, worse-equipped collection of ships had struggled from Libau to its doom.

Seven and a half months. Think of it! Seven and a half months, mostly in the tropics without being docked; crawling along at three and a half, at five knots, sometimes able to keep the fleet together for short periods at nine and a half! They lurched horribly round the Cape with decks packed with coal, coal in officers' cabins; so much coal that the metacentric height of the four big battleships fell to inches instead of feet; they tried to recuperate at Madagascar—at Madagascar of all the evil climates in the world—and gave their men their only run ashore to soak themselves in vile French liquor; they tried, without ammunition, to teach their gunlayers to shoot, tried to teach their deck officers the simplest of evolutions—in steamboats!

Think of those sweltering engine-rooms, crying from every quarter for repair, of the leaking salt-caked condensers, the heated main-bearings, the choked furnaces and boiler tubes; and marvel how the fleet held together and did reach its fate.

Think of their crews, officers and men, the Russians I thought I knew, sticking the mental and physical torture of those ghastly weeks, with the certainty of engaging a superior enemy, flushed with victory and fresh from his dockyard.

Think of old, worn-out Admiral Rozhestvenski. At any moment of those two hundred days and nights he had only to stretch out his hand for a signal pad and scribble the order to return. He had no doubts as to the issue of the coming battle and he knew, full well, that Naval opinion, the world over, would not condemn him if he *did* put back. Think of the mental struggles he must have fought a thousand times, and wonder that from all the corruption of the Russian Nation such a man could rise, and, rising to such a height of self-sacrificing patriotism, imbue so many thousands with his indomitable resolution.

Then turn to the Homeric combat at Manila, that Trafalgar of the East, seven years before, where

"Dewey did it!" and his gunnery-lieutenant rhapsodied.

> " Dawned on the fleet that Dewey led
> A Miracle! while Spaniard bled,
> For on our side was not one dead!"

In the Halls of Valhalla, when the stooping figure of Rozhestvenski shuffles to his place, surely the shades of all Sea Heroes of the Past should stand in mute acknowledgment of how he kept his trust, and maintained the traditions of the sea that bred them.

CHAPTER XII

1905-1907

H.M.S. "Europa"—Write a Boys' Book—The A.P. and the Jew—The Trials of "Achilles"—An Inquest—Join H.M.S. "Albion"—Gibraltar—Captain Pakenham and the Japs—"Black-Birding"—The Atlantic Squadron—Evolutions —Irish Cruise—Manœuvres—Curzon-Howe—Battle Practice off Tetuan.

HAVING paid off the *Ariadne* I joined the *Europa*, a ship with a reduced crew, sharing a buoy with another "reserve" cruiser in the Hamoaze; and in the intervals of hockey and golf, that winter, wrote my first boys' book, *Mr. Midshipman Glover*. I wrote it more as an experiment and for something to do, than with any idea that it would be successful. It owed its origin to a remark in *Truth* the previous year, that none of the modern writers of boys' sea yarns appeared to be familiar with the Navy. So I tried my hand at the job and when the book was eventually published, naturally expected *Truth* to publish a special literary supplement. As far as I remember the "criticism" which *did* appear occupied three lines—"The binding has all the attractive features of this firm's productions and one or two of the illustrations, by Mr. . . ., should appeal to girls as well as boys."

Even read backwards it did not convey any convincing indications that the reviewer agreed with my own estimate of its literary merit, or that he thought that it ushered in a new era of sea romance; nor could our Decoding Officer—the smartest thing in Marine Subalterns—unearth any cryptic eulogy, however he applied his puzzling ciphers.

So I sat down and wrote a "heart-to-heart" letter to *Truth*; told "him" how he had spurred my ambition to supply a National Demand and how many dinner parties and "gin and bitters" I had denied myself in order to produce the story—all for his sake. As a result *Truth* gave me half a column of review and I thought more highly of his literary discrimination.

We had some quaint characters in the ward-room —"reserve" ships generally do—and none quainter than our Paymaster. As an Assistant Paymaster he had won the Middle Weight Championship of the Mediterranean Fleet and even now, in spite of being entirely out of training, was no mean hand at the game.

He had an amusing yarn of those early days when he suffered from "swollen head".

At that time his father was Governor of Pentonville Prison, and he used to spend his leave there and amuse himself by playing practical jokes on the neighbouring street hawkers. Once, however, when he had snatched an umbrella off a "stall", opened it, twirled it round his head and tossed it contemptuously to the angry little Jew who kept the stall, that individual promptly threw off his coat, squared up to him and swore he'd black his eyes unless he bought it.

The A.P., nothing loth, stripped off his coat, a crowd quickly formed a ring and they fought hard; so hard that the A.P. got very much more than he wanted, and was only too glad when there came a warning shout of "Cops! Cops!" Someone pushed his coat into his hands and the crowd hustled him down an alley. He had had so much the worse of the "mix up" that when, a couple of days later, coming back to the jail, he saw his late opponent waiting about outside the Main Gates, he slipped in through his father's private entrance and scarcely ventured abroad again during his leave. However, on the very last day he did go out and coming back ran right into the arms of the little Jew, who grabbed him before he could bolt, touched his cap, held out a little puppy and burst out with, "Been 'anging round for you, sir, ever since our bit of a rough and tumble; never 'ad such a bashin' in me life, that I didn't, and thought as 'ow you'd like a little dawg—just as a memento like!"

Towards the end of 1906, the *Europa* supplied the steaming party to carry out the trials of the new armoured-cruiser *Achilles*, completing at Newcastle.

I always think that a man-of-war looks her rugged best before she is painted like a real lady; that her guns look more formidable and her armour more impenetrable, more *like* armour, when the machine-tool marks still show on them. When we first saw her, moored off dismal Pelaw, one dismal November afternoon in that dismal Tyne, she looked the real fighting ship—horribly uncomfortable to live in, but a wonderful war machine. On that day she seemed all guns, fierce, brutal, destruction-carrying weapons; they caught the eye, and the imagination, almost to the exclusion of the hull which carried them. Afterwards, when I saw her in regular commission I admired her appearance of latent speed and strength but had to search for her guns, with their smooth varnished chases and burnished muzzles—each with its brass band, like a lady's slave-bangle—and I could not realise *them* doing anything unladylike. The rough harridan of Pelaw, with her long claws stretched out, had become the painted "mistress-of-the-seas," with her half-sheathed beautifully manicured fingers, coquetting that day, with a long, smooth Atlantic swell.

The steam trials themselves interested me greatly. A launch—the first meeting of a ship with the sea—appeals strongly to one's sea sense, but it does not grip the imagination so strongly as when the completed ship—such a ship as the *Achilles*—starts off, for the first time, to prove the speed that is in her and to beat, if she can, the records of her sister ships. From the moment when her main engines are first turned by a donkey engine; then warmed up and slowly turned by her own steam; then run at slow speed at her moorings, for adjustments; then run at gradually increasing revolutions until they are tuned up for the final trial—"all out", is a gradual working up to a climax which even rouses the enthusiasm of the dour mechanics of the North, accustomed as they are to such trials.

Perhaps to prevent their enthusiasm running riot, I noticed that the firms always took the precautions of supplying enormous quantities of bottled beer to damp it when the occasion arose.

On her final trial off the mouth of the Tyne, in a long swell, the *Achilles* exceeded the I.H.P. developed by her sister ships and also their speed. In spite of the cold, the drenching spray and the smoke pouring from her funnels, the mighty throbbing efforts of the ship to do her best for the honour of the Tyne stirred me so that I could scarcely leave the deck. I suppose that my enthusiasm amused the "contractors", for when the trial eventually terminated, they made me press the button on the fore bridge which rang the engine-room gong to ease her.

Since then I have attended the steam-trials of turbine-driven ships, but these do not arouse in the onlooker the same interest as those of reciprocating "push-and-pull" machinery.

We left the *Achilles* at Pelaw, and on the way back to Plymouth, in two special trains, some fool, some "admirer of the British bluejacket", passed two bottles of whisky in through a carriage window. A big bully of a stoker seized them both, drank off one bottle in a few minutes; then part of the other—and promptly died.

This made an unpleasant ending to our jaunt up north.

I had to give evidence at the inquest, and received a fee which I handed over to the brothers and sister of the deceased. They had come over from Ireland, were overcome with grief, and appeared to be desperately poor—hence my unwonted generosity. Next day I read in the *Western Morning News* that all three had been "run in" as drunk and disorderly, so I had provided them with, at any rate, one happy evening.

The *Europa* filled up to complement for next year's manœuvres, and thoroughly misbehaved herself, boiler tubes and condensers leaking so badly that she had to return to Plymouth in disgrace, and scarcely stirred from her moorings again until I left her to join H.M.S. *Albion*, commissioning at Portsmouth to join the Atlantic Squadron in March, 1907.

On this occasion I read of my appointment—the first intimation I received of it—in the newspapers of the 23rd, and had to join three days later. Why appointments to this, or, for that matter, to ninety-nine ships out of a hundred, commissioning in a routine manner in normal times, cannot be made a month or six weeks ahead, has always been a mystery to naval officers who are not acquainted with the ramifications of Admiralty Departments, the inertia of the cumbrous bureaucratic machine, its hatred of any departure from precedent and routine—and its entire lack of consideration for officers' and men's private affairs. The *Albion*, a "light" or "second-class" battleship, already obsolescent had, since her return from China after "Tsushima", been undergoing a complete refit. The approximate date of her recommissioning must have been known for months beforehand, and would not have stirred the slumbers of any Foreign Office in Europe—had they known of it; so that the—I suppose—confidential date of recommissioning was merely part of the hide-bound Admiralty system and absolutely unnecessary.

In my own particular case it mattered not "two straws", but to married officers—and men—this constant feeling that by any post or in any newspaper they may pick up, they may find an order which will change their domestic plans, break up their homes and send them packing in a hurry, to depart goodness knows where or for how long, is a constant source of uncertainty, dread and irritation—irritation when the chances are a hundred to one that all the precipitance of the order is entirely unnecessary.

The *Albion* had already moved out to Spithead when I joined her, and before she left next day to calibrate her guns in Bantry Bay, the *Dreadnought*, returned from her first experimental cruise to and from Trinidad, and a Russian Squadron consisting of the new *Slava*, the ill-fated *Cesarevitch* and the cruiser *Bogatyr*, left Portsmouth for a Mediterranean cruise—almost the only ships outside the Black Sea which now flew the blue saltire of St. Andrew.

Having completed our "calibrating" more or less satisfactorily, we returned to Plymouth, embarked supernumeraries and left for Gibraltar. On the way down Channel we had passed the *Suevic* hard and fast on the rocks under the Lizard; on our way back, a fortnight later, only her bows remained, the after part of the great ship having been cut clean off and towed away to have a new bow built on—a remarkable salvage job.

At Gibraltar we were in time to meet the two Japanese armoured cruisers *Tsukuba* and *Chitose*—two very fine ships, and the first big ships built entirely in Japan. They were on their way to the Jamestown Celebrations in the States.

I lunched one day on board the *Tsukuba*, and while being shown round her noticed that all the sight-setting instruments were of the latest type, copied from those in our Navy but manufactured in Japan. My Japanese host impressed me continually with this fact, lest I should overlook it.

Captain Pakenham, commanding the *Antrim*, tall, thin, very erect, was also a guest on this occasion, and wherever he went a crowd of the younger Japanese officers followed, gazing at him with admiration, like a lot of school-boys round a popular master. This hero-worship resulted from an incident which occurred during the 10th August battle, outside Port Arthur. Captain Pakenham had watched this battle on board a Japanese battleship, and during the action spent the time walking up and down the after-bridge, chatting to the officer in charge of the after light Q.F. guns, both of them in white uniform—his, no doubt, spotless and immaculately creased. Presently a Russian shell, bursting near, killed several of the guns' crews, and spattered both with blood. Captain Pakenham, bowing his excuse to the Jap, immediately went down below to his cabin and quickly reappearing in another spotless and immaculately creased uniform, continued his walk and conversation. This exhibition of cool self-control had won him great renown among the Japanese—he had become almost a legendary hero among them.

They gave us that day an interesting exhibition of wrestling in a heavily sanded "ring" on the quarter deck, and I believe had brought professionals with them for exhibition purposes in America. At any rate these, though not so fat as many I had seen in Japan, carried far too much adipose tissue to make efficient seamen.

We now prepared in grim earnest for our "gun layer's" competition, and eventually made a record "shoot" with our ten 6-inch guns, getting off 91 rounds and making 89 hits (64 "bulls eyes") in the one-minute runs. This score won the Atlantic Fleet Shield—a much coveted trophy, of which we were exceedingly proud until another ship wrested it from us and it had to be unscrewed from its bulkhead. I do not know if this competition is still carried out under similar conditions because, even in those days, when it was known as "black-birding", people held many divergent views of its utility, and many gunnery-lieutenants thought that the ammunition expended could be used much more profitably. The change of range was progressive and if the speed of the ship remained constant between the mark buoys, the exact range at any given moment was known to a yard. By dint of constant dummy runs and some practice runs, under similar conditions, the practice became merely a test of the loading ability of the gun's crews and the steadiness of the gun layers and sightsetters—it had no element of reality for war training. However, it had one great advantage; it gave definite results, definite holes in the canvas target, which could be compared with those of other ships—the weather conditions being the only variable factor—so introduced the stimulus of competition.

Without this stimulus, the wearying daily and weekly and monthly drills at "loaders", "dotters" "deflection teachers" and cannon-tube would only have bored both officers and men and made them careless and indifferent.

The preliminary training took place—as usual—in Catalan Bay, at the back of the Rock, and the final practices and firing in Tetuan Bay, from where we could see the Moorish city of Tetuan and on the hills, between it and Ceuta, the ring of lonely Spanish blockhouses—each with its very conspicuous yellow and red flag—which marked the limit of effective Spanish occupation. I could not help wondering if the state of inefficiency existing in the Spanish army at Manila, in my time, still existed here.

A much scarred Moorish, fortified "customs house" building protected the landing place in this exposed bay, and generally two or three small steamers and native dhows or feluccas lay there being unloaded by lighters. They dumped their bales on the sloping beach, and caravans of donkeys and camels carried them away towards Tetuan. Occasionally armed Moors came down from this town at a gallop, pranced about and went back again.

Having completed this very satisfactory shooting, and having done our best to train our crew in the various evolutions we should have to perform, in competition with the remainder of the Atlantic Squadron—"in and out torpedo nets"—"away bower anchor"—"prepare for battle," etc., the *Albion* made her début with this squadron at Berehaven—*Exmouth* (Flag of Vice-Admiral Curzon-Howe), *Albemarle* (Flag of Rear-Admiral Egerton), *Russell*, *Duncan*, *Cornwallis*—and thoroughly disgraced herself on the first "General evolutions" morning. In fact, we were eventually ordered to "exercise independently"—a great indignity.

"In and out torpedo nets" always, or nearly always, caused our downfall; we could let them "go" with the "best", but generally had difficulty hauling them in again.

I hated "evolution" mornings on account of the risk of injury to the men, and the ever-present possibility of having a big surgical job on hand. I thought that all the fuss and noise and liability of accidents were scarcely worth the bother, because none of these evolutions bore any resemblance to war preparations. They did certainly maintain the spirit of emulation between ships, but even this spirit, in a squadron where ships were constantly changing officers and men, was somewhat artificial. I do know that I was always heartily pleased when the bugles sounded "return stores" and nobody had been seriously damaged.

In the old sailing-ship days, "mast and yard" evolutions did test the individual pluck and dexterity of the men aloft, and developed their self-reliance and muscles. Although even these theatrical evolutions had no connection with war realities, they did make the sailing man-of-war a marvellously efficient sailing ship, and train a wonderful breed of resourceful seamen; so, in spite of the aftermath of broken and dead men, they had their definite use.

The modern evolution cannot compare with them as means of physical training; in fact, it is a matter of the greatest difficulty to give the men of a modern ship sufficient exercise to keep them fit. Physical "jerks"—Swedish or others—arouse no mental stimulus, and without some mental stimulus, routine exercises become monotonous and merely exasperating; the men hated them—very exceedingly—in my last few ships.

During the ensuing cruise round Ireland we anchored in Blacksod Bay, County Mayo, and, taking long tramps through the country, I could scarcely credit the existence of the debased, uncivilised conditions in which the people lived in some of the remoter villages. Coming down a hillside one day, towards a village—a miserable collection of hovels—a messmate and myself noticed that the men were driving their women folk indoors, and as we walked through the village a fierce old hag—probably the only person who could speak English—tried to explain that if we wanted sweethearts we should not find them there! It reminded me of inland Corean villages, where the women always fled (but generally unwillingly) at the approach of strange men; and made us feel amazed and humiliated that there were British subjects living under such conditions so close to the centre of the British Empire. It seemed almost incredible.

Of course the whole fleet assembled off Kingston for the Horse Show Week—a joyous week of festivities—and the Aberdeens gave two small dances at the Viceregal Lodge which were not particularly successful. The *Albion* herself had a most interesting and somewhat amusing cricket match against Cochrane's team, on his private ground at Woodbrook. We had challenged him, some weeks previously, but on the way up the coast, read in *The Field* that his team had given the South Africans (who toured England that year) a very close match. In great trepidation, we wrote off at once, apologised for our impudence, humbled ourselves in the dust, confessed that we were not even an average ship's team, and begged Cochrane to forget and forgive our presumption. He would not hear of it, wrote that his professionals would be playing that day for their own English Counties (!) and that we must come along. So off we went and found that though his professionals were certainly not in the team their places had been filled by the "I—Z's" and "Free Foresters", who were then in Dublin, and had a day off!

When we went in to bat, Hesketh-Pritchard commenced with his damnable fast balls at one end and Wynward with his almost more damnable "slows", went on at the other. Cochrane, the enthusiast, who had arranged this delightful day for our enjoyment and his, kept wicket, and our Paymaster, Gilbert, trying to follow Wynward's first ball with his bat—a pleasant ball which pitched to the off and eventually turned out to be a leg ball—struck him hard on the side of his face and blacked his eye so successfully and thoroughly, that *his* day's cricket finished, there and then!

By strenuous efforts we made 103, to which I contributed a "blob", after surviving three overs from Wynward and then trying to pull his first straight ball; Cochrane's side—minus Cochrane—made 279, for seven wickets, and we had a grand day in the country.

Cruising south down the Irish Sea, we went into Queenstown for the celebrations accompanying the cutting of the first sod of the new dock, by Lord Aberdeen—the "Bearded Gent" as he was called, irreverently, on the lower deck.

We gave a dance here, *strictly* limited to fifty couples. I happened to be "running" all the arrangements except the "invitation" book and had arranged everything for one hundred guests; but meanwhile our infatuated, beauty-dazzled, younger officers had been let loose in County Cork, and at mid-day of the dance night the marine subaltern in charge of the invitations confided in me, somewhat bashfully, that two hundred and thirty people had already accepted—and he thought there were a good many more to come!

Pressing signals to the rest of the Fleet and fifty more officers answered, nobly, to our S.O.S., and came to the rescue; they sent over chairs for the extra hundred guests to sit on; special messengers dashed up to Cork to obtain more programmes and more food for their supper—and everything passed off splendidly.

The total cost of this dance amounted to £43, including an orchestra from Cork, but not including "drinks".

Of this total, the Captain probably paid ten pounds, the twenty ward-room officers about twenty-seven, and the gun-room the remainder. These figures are interesting as showing how comparatively inexpensively quite successful dances can be given on board ship.

Twenty-six battleships took part in the North Sea Manœuvres of 1908, only six of which were not in full commission. They formed by far the most powerful fleet ever manœuvred together, and the concluding battle, off Wick, between Lord Charles Beresford and Admiral Custance, made one of the finest sea pictures that I have ever seen.

The October sun that evening, low down in the sky behind Wick, had painted the whole of the horizon with its crimsons, oranges, and gold; the lively sea sparkled in the gorgeous light, and as the lines of battleships manœuvred at high speed and turned, from time to time, their sea-sprayed broadsides to the sun, they glowed with the warm tints of the western sky and became, again and again, transformed from drab engines of war to glowing galleons of beauty.

Even the dense black smoke pouring from the funnels of the old *Mars*, experimenting with her new oil-burning furnaces, caught the glow as it hung across the clear sky, and showed red skeins among its slowly dissolving coils.

The *Swiftsure* and *Triumph* were conspicuous during these manœuvres because of their evident inability to fight their main-deck guns when steaming at 15 knots, even in the slight, short sea then running.

Ships maintained "war routine" and at night the unaccustomed darkness of the upper deck had a very eerie effect; we often found ourselves talking on deck in whispers, and the period of manœuvres lasted so short a time that we did not become used to it. Little we thought—however much we talked of the coming German war—how quickly we should become accustomed to such conditions six years later.

One night, in the darkness, we failed to notice that our flagship, *Exmouth*, had increased speed, and when morning broke the Atlantic Fleet was "all anyhow". Lord Charles Beresford made a signal calling our attention, and Curzon-Howe, usually the most courteous of Flag Officers, but now somewhat nettled, replied, "Your reprimand received by me and my squadron."

Lord Charles, afraid that he had hurt his feelings, replied, "Oh please don't think so; not a reprimand; only a fatherly calling of attention".

Later on, when the fleets dispersed, farewell signals flew backwards and forwards of varying degrees of warmth and politeness; and, as we expected, our Admiral won "hands down" with his honey-laden semaphores.

I believe that this was the last occasion on which Lord Charles flew his flag at sea—hence the signals.

His Squadron had a great regard for Admiral Curzon-Howe, his ability and the pleasant kindliness of his manner. I met him, for the first time, shortly after the *Albion* had joined his Flag. I had gone on board the *Exmouth* as my ship's representative on the Fleet Hockey Committee, and, arriving too soon for the meeting and not knowing a soul on board, was left kicking my heels on the quarter-deck in what was then considered the usual "damned flagship manner." On the other side, the starboard side, I saw the Admiral walking up and down in lonely grandeur and, presently noticing the "lost sheep", he came across, spoke to me by name—although he had never seen me before—and yarned. This act of thoughtfulness illustrates his character, and explains his great and genuine popularity.

After these manœuvres, the whole Atlantic Squadron returned to Gibraltar to work up for Battle Practice. We arrived there in time for the annual visit of the Governor of Algeciras, who came across the bay in the little cruiser *Estramadura,* to call on the Governor of Gibraltar, on the occasion of King Edward's birthday. On no other occasion does he set foot in Gibraltar, "temporarily in the possession of the English". His lancer escort of cavalry, with their gay pennons, made a picturesque splash of colour as they trotted across the Neutral Ground from Linea, through the dusty main street and formed up abreast the landing place, where the Governor's launch disembarked him.

Week after week, we worked up for this, our first Battle Practice, and a great morning it was on the day of our final test. I think every one on board had that unpleasant "examination morning" feeling, much increased by all the publicity and scenario arranged for the occasion. Umpires from other ships arrived, and irritated us by their nonchalance and glorious breakfast appetites; soldiers from the garrison came across to Tetuan in a torpedo boat—also with sharpened appetites—to watch the *Albion* make an idiot of herself, or not, as it should turn out.

A cruiser towed away the great target until it looked a tiny patch of red on the horizon; Blount, the Gunnery Lieutenant, in a state of scarcely suppressed perturbation, tested, for the last time, his transmitting instruments and their circuits, implored the Paymaster not to make any errors in the transmitting rooms, and the Senior Engineer not to alter her "revolutions" down below. We cleared for action and went to Quarters: the gun-layers and guns'-crews fidgeted about restlessly and excitedly, testing primers, testing dials, rubbing up the telescope lenses. We got under way; the Flagship weighed; the 2nd Flagship followed; they took charge of us, the *Exmouth* ahead and the *Albemarle* astern; there was no escape; between the two we were led like a lamb to the slaughter.

With a crowd of "idlers" and soldiers, I climbed up to the tower fore-top.

We worked up to fifteen knots; the Flagship swung round; we followed and knew that we were to fire on the starboard beam. The guns' crews of the port 6-inch came across to watch, climbing to points of vantage, already thick with everyone who had no job of work to do.

We began to close the target; it grew, steadily, larger and larger; the order "stand by", sent a thrill through the ship. Looking down from the top I saw the booms and boat-decks crowded with eager men and the sick-berth stewards dashing round, for the last time, with their bags of cotton wool and plasticine ear-plugs; on the fore bridge Captain Limpus tugged nervously at his short beard; the plump Navigator and the Chief Yeoman of Signals glued their glasses on the Flagship's after-bridge; and the bugler boy stood close to them, nervously wetting the mouth piece of his bugle.

Up above, in the control top, we could hear the range-finder number calling out, monotonously, "7–5–0–0–7–3–0–0"; for the very last time Blount yelled down, through his megaphone, to the officer of the fore-turret, squatting cross-legged on top of it, "What d'you show?" He bobbed his head down the sighting-hood, and shouted back "7-3-0-0"; Blount waved his hand—satisfied that, at any rate, *his* dial reading was correct.

The range decreased to 7–0–0–0; then, more slowly, to 6–8–0–0, when there was a yell of "Flagship signals 'Open Fire', sir"; the bugler sounded "commence firing", without waiting for orders; the bugler, aft, followed suit; fire-gongs sounded in the turret and upper-deck casemates; the fore-mast and top swayed as the fore-turret guns fired and a cloud of hot reddish-brown cordite-smoke swept across us; shook again slightly as the after-turret fired; and the starboard 6-inch went off with a roar.

With attention, we could follow the 12-inch projectiles on their way to the target; sometimes we could see the hole in the red canvas appear suddenly as a "hit" went through it. There were few "shorts"; the splashes kept leaping up almost on top of the target and behind it.

The range decreased; more gongs clanged; more orders from up above; we scarcely noticed the swaying of the "top"; cries of "hit! hit!" came up from the excited men on the booms, "That's got it!" and a groan, as a corner of the target disappeared and for a moment everyone feared that the whole fabric might collapse—more hits!—a 6-inch struck the target raft and hurled timber into the air—"over! hit! over!"—they were too rapid to follow and at a range of 4–8–0–0, the *Exmouth* signalled "cease fire", the buglers sounded it—and our first battle-practice ended.

"Pretty fair," said the Umpires, non-committally, as they hurried down below, and it was more than "pretty fair" they found when we closed the peppered target and sent them away to count the actual hits.

We had fired fifteen rounds from our turret guns and made thirteen hits; the 6-inch results were almost as good, and presently the grinning signalmen came running aft with signal pads: "C-in-C to *Albion*, Congratulate you on magnificent shooting"—and we all pruned ourselves with pleasure and pretended to the soldiers, that of course it was quite an ordinary score—for us! Even Scribner, the Young Doctor, and myself felt we had had a hand in it, for had we not sent Blount's best turret gun-layer to duty that morning, refusing to believe the thermometer which made gross exaggerations about his temperature, sending him back from his turret to the sick-bay and bed, again, directly the "cease-fire" sounded!

Then we watched the 2nd Flagship put through the "mill" and make poor shooting, and tried to feel sorry for her; but there is no such thing as pity, even for only a second flagship, and we chuckled to ourselves as we slowly towed the battered target back to Gibraltar.

Night firing—as usual—turned out to be very much of a fiasco, and then away to England we went for Christmas leave, racing the rest of the Squadron, at four-fifth power, for the first thirty hours—a very popular race when home and leave are in the "offing".

CHAPTER XIII

1908

Assassination of King of Portugal—Lagos—Gibraltar—Austrian Squadron—Rhonda—Ceuta—A Russian Squadron—The "Cesarevitch"—"For Remembrance"—A Russian Commander—Our Three Captains—S.M.O. for the First Time—Reflections.

At the end of January, 1908, the Atlantic Squadron lay in Arosa Bay, off Vigo, and on the 2nd February received the news of the assassination of the King of Portugal and the Crown Prince, at Lisbon, the previous day.

I went for a long walk that afternoon, and did not notice any change in the ordinary cheerful, lazy Sunday "atmosphere", either in the country villages or in the city itself; to judge from the normal conditions of the streets the populace at Vigo regarded the crime with entire indifference.

On returning on board, I found the ships preparing for sea in case they should be required to assist in maintaining order in Lisbon. We did sail next morning, but heard that the Capital was completely quiet, so anchored off Lagos, and on the day of the royal funeral "scandalised" yards, not such a simple matter as in a sailing ship, because of our standing wire lifts, though peculiarly striking and effective when at length completed. The *Drake*, flagship of the 2nd Cruiser Squadron, anchored ahead of us, fired a gun every fifteen minutes all that day, keeping time with a gun in a fort ashore.

Back again at Gibraltar, we were kept busy for three months' gunnery, the ultimate results, in our case, falling short of those obtained in the previous year. During this time we entertained an Austrian Squadron—*Karl*, *Ferdinand Max*, *Friedrich* and two destroyers—and saw much of their officers. As usual, most of them spoke English fluently; one of them accounted for his skill in the matter of foreign languages by explaining that even in his own "division" of men aboard the *Karl*, five completely different languages were spoken, and as Officer of Division he had to know them all, so found all foreign languages easy to acquire. He made no secret of the fact that this divergence of language, customs and habit, militated very seriously against the efficiency and the feeling of comradeship of their crews. Of patriotism, as judged by our standard, there appeared to be none. To make matters worse, most of these conscripts were for short service only, and came from inland villages without any knowledge of the sea.

I spent a day with two of the *Karls*, riding through the "cork" woods in Spain, and learnt much of the difficulties of creating a national navy from the very divergent and traditionally antagonistic portions of the loosely joined Austrian Empire. They did not appear to feel that personal loyalty to their ruling House which German Naval Officers used to express towards their Kaiser, but were exceedingly proud of their own Navy and naval traditions—such as they were.

The *Albion* now underwent a long refit at Gibraltar, and had magazine-cooling machinery installed. During this time I wrote my second boys' book; and with much hockey, cricket, tennis, riding parties in Spain and bathing parties at Rosia, the five months slipped past quickly.

During this refit, I visited Rhonda, which still bears many traces of the time when, towards the end of the fifteenth century, it was the winter quarters of Ferdinand and Isabella's cosmopolitan army, over against Granada, the winter quarters of the Moors. Many of the houses, where those feudal nobles, gathered from all Europe, used to live during the winter, still bear their coats of arms carved on the stonework of the doors; and I could not help wondering what humble dwelling sheltered those three Knights from Scotland, who came to seek honour and renown and of whom Prescott writes to the effect that "their armour, of ancient pattern and much worn, was unadorned; they had no brilliant surcoats or painted devices on their shields; their war horses were meanly caparisoned; they were followed by no squires, and being much impoverished, kept to themselves and were thought little of until, in battle, by their impetuosity and the strangeness of their charging in grim silence, they won the regard of the Christian army".

I also went across to Ceuta one day, and tried to prevail upon the sentries to allow me to pass outside the town; I did walk a hundred yards along the road, but they came running after me and brought me back. Machine-guns were mounted significantly—if incongruously—on the very ancient battlemented walls, on each side of that gateway; and away towards the hills, where stood the Spanish blockhouses, wound the tracks along which mule-trains passed to revictual them, often with danger and difficulty.

It was a Sunday morning, and in the great square in front of the military hospital, a military band played to a great throng of officers and men of the garrison and their wives. Every time a man met or passed an officer he saluted, and as he saluted he had to halt—a most irritating method of acknowledging

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RHONDA.

rank. It irritated me even to watch it, so I went off down to the wharf in the old town, among the fisherfolk, and saw feluccas crammed to the gunwale edge with oranges, gleaming gold in the bright sunshine. I had never seen so many oranges, and never realised how powerful the scent of the newly picked fruit could be; it pervaded the whole wharf.

In February, 1909, sixteen United States battleships—the whole fighting force of that Navy—arrived in Gibraltar, having nearly completed their round-the-world cruise; Some of these ships had super-imposed double-"storeyed" turrets, a very much debated design and already in disfavour with their "ordnance" officers; many of whom, too, held very strong adverse opinions about the lattice military-masts with which all the ships were fitted. They allowed that they were almost indestructible by shell fire, but complained that even a strong breeze made them vibrate, and that when steaming fast, especially in a sea-way, they swayed and vibrated to such an extent that accurate range-taking from their "tops" was often impossible. However strongly they may have expressed their views to us, they apparently did not influence the Board of Design in the States, for I believe that the U.S. only discarded them in favour of the British "tripod-mast" design, eighteen years later.

The *Cesarevitch* and *Bogatyr* turned up again while the Yankees were at Gibraltar, and the cheerful little Danish cruiser *Heimdal* also put in an appearance. We gave a dinner party to twenty of these "foreigners"—a most interesting and amusing "show"—the most striking feature being the almost complete abstinence of the Russians. I happened to sit between two Russians, one of whom, Romaskeff of the *Cesarevitch* claimed relationship, as his mother was an Englishwoman of the same name as mine.

He was a somewhat depressed man and talked, chiefly, of their Japanese war; he seemed unable to concentrate his conversation on anything else and spoke with great bitterness of the corruption, incompetence and inefficiency of the System in those days.

I dined with him two days later—an early six o'clock dinner—on board his ship, and being the only guest there were none of those formalities which usually occur on board a foreign man-of-war. I could scarcely credit the changed conditions I found on board; no one drank more than two small vodkhas with their "sakooska" before we sat down, and during the meal most of them drank nothing but claret and soda.

Only the doctor and the Priest, out of those twenty five or thirty officers, maintained, to any extent, the traditional alcholic habits to which I had been accustomed out in China, ten years previously. They seemed, too, to be an entirely different type of men, with bodies kept fit by exercise and with brains active and alert. After dinner the younger ones stripped off their monkey jackets and wrestled, did feats of strength and cockfighting, just as is customary in our own Navy.

My host took me all over the ship just before hands "piped down". Up in the conning tower, where Admiral Vitgeoft and nearly all the officers and men there, had been killed, on that unhappy day, outside Port Arthur, he pointed out where the fatal shell had struck the down-curved edge of the conning-tower hood and laminated the compound armour. There was no paint on it; the marks of flame still showed; it looked as if it might have been struck that day.

I asked Romaskeff why?

"For remembrance," he answered, almost reverently.

“For Remembrance”

Along the lower-deck, in the bulkheads of the engine room “uptakes”, were several steel patches securely riveted but unpainted, and not concealing the surrounding dented and fire-scorched bulkhead round their edges; one or two deck-stanchions were also bent and scarred.

These all had been left like that “for remembrance”.

He took me for’ard, under the fo’c’stle, to show me the greatest innovation of all—a reading-room for the men, crowded with bluejackets poring over the Russian newspapers that had arrived that day, and more men eagerly waiting their turn to read them. Yet only ten years ago the average Russian bluejacket could scarcely read, and if he could, newspapers were kept from him as a source of possible contamination!

My companion and I moved freely along the crowded mess deck as the men slung their hammocks, and I thought of the time, not many years before, when a Russian officer would scarcely dream of going along a mess-deck, at night, unless the Bos’n or his mates escorted him.

We finished the evening in Romaskeff’s cabin, yarning with the Flag Lieutenant and Commander, and over a glass of whisky and soda discussed European politics, of which they appeared to know vastly more than I did. But always their conversation turned to the vast changes for the better that the catastrophe of the war had forced on their Navy.

It was a most interesting evening, and possibly the most interesting fact I gleaned was their definite belief that had that 12-inch shell struck the side of the conning-tower and not the edge of the hood—a foot lower than it struck—the whole course of the war would have been changed. At the time the Russian Fleet was holding its own, and no ship had been seriously damaged; the chances of it shaking off the Japanese and reaching Vladivostock were good; once it had reached Vladivostock, Rodzesventski's fleet would have had a *comparatively* easy task to join forces, and the control of the sea would, in all possibility, have passed into Russian hands. As it happened, that one shell, followed a moment later by another, bursting between the back of the turret and the foremast, and killing most of the signal staff, put the ship temporarily out of control; the dead body of the man at the wheel jammed it hard over, and before "relief" from below could clear away the corpses and "midships" the wheel, the unfortunate ship had turned a complete circle, and thrown the whole line into muddled disorder. The Japanese immediately took full advantage of this confusion, and inflicted terrible punishment; panic ensued, and the melancholy retreat of the Fleet to its doom, at Port Arthur, followed: a direct result of that one shell.

The next Russian Naval Officer I talked to for any length of time, travelled with me, in 1917, from London to Portsmouth by train. The mutiny at Kronstadt, with its massacre of hundreds of naval officers, had taken place some short time before, and those naval officers who still were functioning, by permission of the seamen soviets, exercised only precarious authority. This Russian Commander, a mining expert, in England on duty, had laid the minefields in the Baltic early in the War, and now had in his pocket a telegram ordering him to return immediately to superintend the clearing of them.

While the train rumbled along he told me that, for some reason which I forget, he knew that he was unpopular with the men, and he feared his fate if he did go back; he would certainly be cashiered if he did not, and he had no other means of livelihood. He gave me to understand that most of the officers who had assisted him to lay those mine-fields had been killed or fled the country, and that he was practically the only one who knew their exact positions and how to clear them. He was torn between his duty to his country, his fears for his own safety if he did obey that telegram, and the consequences to himself if he did not do so. In the security of an English railway carriage he tried to wrestle with the problem he had to solve, and when we parted on the platform at Portsmouth, he had not solved it.

While refitting at Gibraltar we also helped to entertain the Italian cruiser *Elba*, with a most amusing lot of North Italian officers on board. Three of them were married to Scotch wives, and held firmly the opinion that the union of a northern Italian man and a Scotch woman produced the finest progeny in the world. We gave an afternoon "at home" for them, to which we invited some of the ladies of the Gibraltar garrison, and they quickly proved that, as sailors, they could outstrip any other nationality in "swiftness". One and all could speak English perfectly, but had an extraordinary difficulty in remembering surnames—especially ladies' surnames. They regretted the fact, most bitterly and ardently; and having ascertained the ladies' Christian names, managed very successfully indeed, by frequent repetition, to retain *them* in their memories. They disarmed any half-hearted objections by their joyous impetuosity.

In the two years the *Albion* had been attached to the Atlantic Squadron the Admiral (Curzon-Howe) had been replaced by Prince Louis of Battenberg, and there had been three Seconds-in-Command—Admirals Egerton, Jellicoe and Blake Fisher. In the same period, the *Albion* herself had passed through the hands of three Captains—Pelham, Limpus (both of them promoted, out of her) and Captain Rosslyn

Wemyss. Changes in the ward-room had been frequent; the original Fleet Paymaster, the Engineer Commander and the Navigator had gone, and several of the "watch-keepers"; on the lower deck men were constantly being sent ashore for gunnery or torpedo training and their places filled with new ratings—boys and ordinary seamen.

The three captains were men of very different types. Pelham, dapper and erect, beautifully groomed on all occasions, very careful of his figure, highly sensitive, giving orders in nervous abrupt sentences, an efficient Captain but not, apparently, taking much personal interest in the crew or the ship herself, and giving us the impression that he did his "job", not because he liked it, but because he had to complete his sea time for promotion. He would sit through a quarter-deck sing-song, with a well-bred look of interest, but could not conceal his relief when it was over—very few of us could, for the matter of that—and he was free to hop down below to his cabin, for his game of bridge.

Then came Captain A. H. Limpus,* tall and thin, slightly stooping, with tawny beard and a keen sense of dry humour, who made himself part of the ship, identified himself with her almost immediately, and gave the impression that the men of the crew were individuals whom he wanted to know personally. I believe that he would have changed places with the Commander, willingly, in order to take a more intimate part in the work of the ship, and I am certain that at times he wished himself her Gunnery-Lieutenant again.

Pomposity was absent from his character; we recognised the quiet, unostentatious merit that was in him, and we respected and admired him much.

He would sit through a long tedious sing-song, with his long legs twisted together, smoking a fairly rank cigar, and keenly interested in everything and everybody, enthusiastic over a good "turn" and making allowances for frequent feeble ones. He enjoyed being there as one of the ship's complement —as belonging to the ship herself.

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* Now Admiral Sir Arthur Limpus, K.C.M.G., C.B.

When he left, Captain Rosslyn Wemyss* bounced happily on board with his eye glass, and so long as nothing happened to ruffle the even tenor of ship's routine, worried himself not at all. He had not been born to worry; he was too senior to commence worrying now—and he didn't. If things did not go smoothly it irritated him because this life—especially naval life—seemed to be, for him, only a joyous progress from one pleasant job to another, leading, inevitably, to the serene atmosphere of 'flag' rank where his social charms would have still greater scope. So long as we appreciated his many good stories and had a few new ones of our own, in exchange, he was content. He exuded cheerfulness and hadn't an enemy in the world. He would come up to a sing-song and try hard, with the best endeavour in the world, to appreciate it, but could not maintain his interest, and sat through it simply because he had to do so—a feeling not unknown among some of us.

These changes may be inevitable in ships close to England, but result in a considerable diminution in that pride of ship and in her general level of efficiency, compared with the conditions prevailing in the more stable complement of a ship on a foreign station.

We had a Commander who had never out-grown his sub-Lieutenant days in a gunroom. He wanted to rule the ward-room as he had ruled his gunroom in days gone by, and had to be taught that he could not. He was one of that somewhat numerous class of naval officers who believe that noise connotes efficiency, and that a stentorian voice is synonymous with intelligence, and possibly a readier means of obtaining recognition of zeal and merit. He was an extraordinarily generous, warm-hearted man, but so impetuous and wayward that, as President of the Mess he often disturbed the harmony of the ward-room.

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*Now Admiral of the Fleet, Lord Wester Wemyss, K.C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O.

I myself was now nearly forty years of age, and after fifteen years' service in the Navy had only a half-stripe more on my sleeve than when I joined. The Captain of the ship at the end of the commission was the only officer older than myself; in the ward-room, the majority of my messmates were not twenty-five years old.

Although in the Navy one grows "old" slowly, becomes a S.O.B. or Silly Old Buffer almost imperceptibly, the time was now approaching when the first glamour of the Service began to shed some of its lustre; when sometimes the pranks of one's younger messmates, which used to amuse so much, began to irritate.

I "captained" the officers' hockey team, shot for the ship's rifle team, played in the officers' golf team, was third in the batting averages, for the commission, and could generally defeat anyone else on board at lawn-tennis, so had not allowed myself to become stiff, but did begin to feel that the delightful inconsequentialities of youth were losing their charm—especially when one could not escape them.

In the *Albion* I gained my first real experience of being the Senior Medical Officer—the "P.M.O."—of a ship in full commission. Perhaps the least part of the duties of a doctor is to treat the sick; the most important is to prevent disease, and this entails constant acquaintance with the whole working conditions and the whole internal economy of a ship and a ship's company. Inevitably, if his work is done conscientiously, in his endeavours to make the living conditions of the ship's company as hygienic as circumstances will permit, it brings him into conflict with the Executive Officer—the Commander or First Lieutenant—of the ship, who may meet his suggestions with a spirit of latent, even if not expressed, antagonism, as a reflection on his own competence. This is only natural; he has quite enough to do to keep the wheels of complicated routine running smoothly without someone pointing out a possible source of trouble, to avoid which will throw them out of gear.

Nevertheless, a naval doctor has constantly to decide if it is worth taking the trouble to point out any matter which might improve conditions but is contrary to usage. It is much more easy for him to shirk his responsibilities—and, in the long run, possibly more pleasant.

It is more easy to float along comfortably with the "System" than to fight against it. So long as nothing unusual happens he will probably get as good a "flimsy"—certificate of service—from a cheery Captain if he plays a good game of bridge or drives a long ball at golf; better, perhaps, because he has never troubled the waters of complacency.

Hospital appointments are few; shore appointments do not always mean more interesting medical or surgical work; study courses are rare, pass in a flash and do not always have much value; many a naval doctor who has not had the luck or opportunity to specialise in any subject, feels, as he grows older, that his knowledge is gradually growing less. He counts the years which separate him from his maximum pension and wishes that they would pass more quickly.

These are the disadvantages of the Naval Medical Service, disadvantages inherent to all navies and disadvantages which it seems impossible to obviate, notwithstanding the earnest efforts made, from time to time, to do so. To gloss over them, in a book written by a Naval doctor, is to give a misleading description of his impressions.

About this age of forty, non-executive officers begin to notice the discomforts of ward-room existence. Marine officers know that at the end of a commission they will go ashore and be real soldiers again—for a time at any rate; for the others there is, generally speaking, no escape. At the end of a commission they will go to another ship, be older still, and the difference of age will be still more pronounced, until presently they feel themselves unable to cope with youthful boisterousness and excessive vitality, gradually become more and more self-centred, and take less and less interest in their mess and its life; they do then become "S.O.B.'s".

Their responsibilities may increase but their authority does not, and having passed their careers in an atmosphere where authority is supreme and held entirely and necessarily by one class of officer, and is extended among them with increase of age and seniority, the disparity becomes more obvious as time goes on.

It is essential for the efficiency of the Navy that executive officers should rise to higher ranks at an early age; but human nature being what it is, it does not add to one's tranquillity to find the young lieutenant with whom one wrestled and tumbled and skylarked twenty years ago, now commanding your new ship—even flying his "flag" in her; the midshipman whom you taught hockey and football, now the commander and the President of your new Mess; the youngsters with whom you now have to live, not born when you entered the Service; and you, yourself, certainly with more stripes on your arm, but doing still the same work with, perhaps, more responsibility, but without the authority and the prospect of the prizes which authority holds out to those who exercise it.

That this must be so is inevitable—the Navy could not be "run" in any other way—but it is none the less the reason why enthusiasm for ward-room life in the Service often diminishes very rapidly among non-executive officers after the age of forty years.

Life in the Navy afloat is for those who have youth or "command"; when youth fades and middle-age brings no "command", life then gradually grows irksome.

But—and this is the compensating secret—life in the Navy afloat, the constant association with youth—care-free, irresponsible youth—youthful exuberance and youthful enthusiasms, staves off the approach of middle-age to an almost unbelievable degree.

At the age of forty-six I played my last game of football. A torn thigh muscle—a cab and bed; football boots put on the shelf for "good;" and only then was I compelled to admit that the deception that I was not middle-aged could no longer be maintained.

CHAPTER XIV

1909-1913

Fleet Reviews—Chatham Hospital—The Anti-matrimonial Captain—Commission the "Dartmouth"—Nedjeb, the Turk Torpedo Lieutenant—The Wreck of the "Delhi"—Join H.M.S. "Argyll"—Medicine Ball—"The Great Illusion"—An Exhibition Shoot—The German Sea Menace—Join H.M.S. "Princess Royal"—Ventilation—Gun Mountings—Fleet War Training.

DURING the summer of 1909 the whole of the available naval forces of the country demonstrated their strength to the English people with three reviews—the first at Spithead, to give the Imperial Press Conference an opportunity of actually seeing what was being done to meet the growing German menace on the sea, the second at Southend, still further to drive the fact home to the people of London, and the third again at Spithead, nominally in honour of the Czar of Russia. Among the 144 ships assembled, the *Albion* was the oldest in design and age, a remarkable fact, indicative of the enormous sacrifices England had recently made to maintain her sea-power.

Two days after the Guildhall banquet and the Southend review, Bleriot made his epoch-making flight across the Channel. The *Albion* was then at anchor off Folkestone, and forty-eight hours later we saw harbour craft dashing out of Dover to pick up Latham who, while essaying to rival the Frenchman, had fallen into the sea. The least imaginative of us remembered, then, something of his country's history, and wondered what this progress in aviation portended in war-time.

At the Czar's review a French yacht, barque-rigged, auxiliary steam, committed a horrible solecism. She sailed through the lines, from the Needles to Spithead, with her snowy square-sails drawing bravely, filled with a breeze dead aft—a perfect picture of beauty; then, to everyone's disgust, she put her helm over and came back—steaming back—with every sail flat a-back against her masts and topping lifts, her presumed owner and his guests on her deck, entirely oblivious of their shocking outrage to the delicate susceptibilities of some sixty thousand officers and men. Bateman should have drawn the picture of our horrified expressions.

I was now taken out of the *Albion* and sent to the Junior Surgical billet at Chatham Hospital. After fifteen years, mostly spent at sea, I had almost resigned myself to growing old and "rusty", in ships, for the remainder of my Service career, and this unexpected good fortune was no doubt due to the fact that the Fleet-Surgeon of the Naval Brigade in which I had served in the Boer War, was now the Medical Director-General—Sir James Porter—probably the most energetic and efficient holder of that position during my Service career—certainly the least conventional. Many of the Medical Director-Generals of the Naval Medical Service are chosen —as far as one can judge—for the suavity of their personalities. The Lords of the Admiralty do not care to have too self-willed an officer at the head of the Medical Department; they naturally prefer one who will not be too importunate in his demands for the improvement of the Naval Medical Service, one who is most amenable to reason—their reasoning

—and who will not be likely to resign his appointment as a public protest when their two stock arguments, "The Treasury, my dear fellow, the Treasury won't hear of it", and "But, my dear sir; just think of it; that would mean an Order in Council", are brought forward to convince him of the futility of proposing changes for the improvement of his Service, especially changes which would cause additional expense. Generally speaking, it is only when there is such a dearth of young doctors coming forward to join the Navy, and the necessity of obtaining more becomes imperative, that the Lords of the Admiralty descend from their Olympian Heights. Occasionally a Second Sea Lord is genuinely interested in the attempts of the Medical Department to improve the professional ability of naval doctors, to give them more opportunities of keeping abreast advances in medical and surgical science and to stimulate their professional zest. But this does not often happen, and during the whole of my thirty odd years in the Navy I have felt—and this feeling is almost universal among naval doctors—that the Admiralty regard our presence in the Navy only as an unpleasant necessity. This feeling is summed up in the old Naval "saying" that if the Admiralty had their way the only non-executive officer on board ship, besides Engineers, would be "a medical-missionary with some knowledge of accounts", who could easily carry out the combined work of chaplain, paymaster and doctor. Anyhow, for nearly two years I left the sea and worked at Chatham Hospital, learning surgery—especially operative surgery; and responsibilities were now forced on me to which I had not been accustomed.

While serving in ships a case requiring hospital treatment can, generally, all the world over, be sent to some hospital; even accurate diagnosis is not really essential. One watches a bad case slung over the side in his cot into the waiting boat alongside, and breathes a sigh of relief; the doctors on shore will make their own diagnosis and carry out their own treatment; one's own individual responsibility has ended.

One seldom has the opportunity of treating a difficult or obscure case, from start to finish; one is living in surroundings which make it difficult to maintain skill and knowledge, and I must confess that in those first fifteen joyous years of my Service life I had not taken full advantage of those opportunities of visiting hospitals which came my way. I now found that I had lost much knowledge, and tried to conceal the fact—often unsuccessfully—while I strove hard to reacquire it. Surgery had made enormous strides since my medical student days, and for the first few months I felt an impostor—as no doubt I was.

There were periods of great mental anxiety when I realised my lack of experience very keenly, and had not always anyone from whom I could seek advice; but on the whole, the time at Chatham passed without any disasters which I now feel that I could or should have avoided.

The atmosphere of hospital life made a great contrast to that of ship life, with its limited outlook and necessary though soul-destroying conformity to routine.

Unrealities—from a doctor's point of view—had been left behind for a time; work was now real, and devoted to the accomplishment of a definite social end; almost every day we were "up against" the job of saving life or of restoring a maimed man to full physical fitness. The pleasure of successful achievement was intense, and as the months went past I wondered how I could possibly have been satisfied with ship existence, cramped, cabined and confined, whose ultimate object, if ever achieved, was to destroy life.

Moreover, those who now gave us orders, and regulated our work, were men of our own profession, imbued with the same ideals; the authority they exercised was chiefly that of a longer experience and a greater knowledge than we juniors possessed, a professional authority differing from that exercised on board ship; and it made a very agreeable change.

Twice a year the very pleasant Commander-in-Chief made a formal inspection and remarked—Commanders-in-Chief frequently do remark on these occasions—"that the operating theatres seem to be clean". Even if they do suspect that the usual dirt has been hurriedly scraped off the floors and instruments and swept away out of sight, in the not unknown, naval inspection fashion, they are always too polite to suggest this.

Once a month, the Commodore came up from the Barracks to preside on Invaliding Boards and beguile the occasions with genial witticisms at our professional expense; but even that anachronism is now a thing of the past, a relic of that ancient past which saw Naval Hospitals commanded by Post Captains. This had been abolished long before my time, but the memory of it still remained. Otherwise we did our work in peace.

Inspector-General Christopher Pearson had charge of the Hospital during my time, and controlled it with wisdom and dignified courtesy. Sincere in approval and gentle in disapproval he never wasted words with either and earned our sincere respect with both.

He, the two Deputy-Inspectors and myself occupied the four big "official residences", and though I dare say that we were not entirely to blame for the fact that we were all bachelors—doubtless each of us concealed a broken heart from an unsympathetic world—the fact that these really good modern houses were in our possession caused much amused envy.

Thirty years ago, the old "sailing-ship-era" dictum "an officer married is an officer marred", was still often quoted with conviction, and officers certainly did not marry at such an early age as they do now. The mere fact that the Admiralty still refuses to grant "Marriage allowances" to naval officers—as is done both in the Army and the Air Force—is almost conclusive evidence that this idea still holds in official minds.

Long commissions on foreign stations—much more numerous than now-a-days—may have been the cause, or perhaps the poorness of the pay and a different outlook on naval life; but certainly, whatever the reason, young officers now plunge into matrimony, buy a motor car or a perambulator—perhaps both—and saddle themselves with domestic responsibilities at the earliest opportunity, responsibilities which must inevitably tend to lessen their interest in their own ship and their own work. That it does actually lead to lessened efficiency is, I believe, indisputable.

I must spin a somewhat amusing yarn about an old friend of mine, the Captain of a ship, not many years ago, who held such extreme anti-matrimonial views that if he could not actually get rid of a married officer, he showed his disapproval of him in every way. One very energetic officer in this ship managed to conceal the fact of his marriage, and had packed his wife off to her maternal home with strict orders not to show her face in a naval port. If only he could keep his crime secret and impress his Captain sufficiently, he hoped that the very next promotion list might contain his name.

Presently the ship was sent off to carry out prolonged gunnery experiments, and after every five days of hard work, used to anchor on a Friday evening, week after week, till Monday morning, in a very beautiful harbour on the east coast of Scotland. Every Friday evening the stern Skipper, with his golf bag and gun case, used to disappear until Monday morning; he would land abreast the little station, and the train would carry him away to his golf links and rough shooting to fit himself, by strenuous exercise, for the arduous work of the coming week. Our promotion-expecting-hero bit his nails with anguish as he watched, week after week, the two married officers, who had not been turned out of the ship, disappear ashore to the little hotel, at the head of the bay, whither their wives had been summoned, and thought of his own wife shut up in her distant home. At last the ardency of his feelings broke down his resolutions; he found a village on the map, miles from a railway, and he, too, telegraphed to her to fly to him and take a room there in the local inn. That next Friday evening the golf clubs, the gun case and the Skipper were put on shore as usual, and, the coast being clear till Monday morning, the ardent swain bicycled off to his dear little village to the arms of his dear little wife.

There she was waiting for him, framed in the gaily creepered inn porch. Oh joy! Oh rapture! but even as he embraced her his arms fell limply to his side for, leaning against the wall, he saw that well-known golf bag and the gun case with the well known initials of his Skipper.

Flight, immediate flight was imperative, and with shaking voice he explained to his puzzled wife that his Captain was inside and that if they were discovered he'd lose every chance of promotion.

"He doesn't believe in naval chaps getting married," he groaned, "What shall we do?"

He saw her eyes open and a twinkle linger in them for a moment as she led him to an open window and made him peep in.

At one of the little tables in the tiny "coffee" room sat four people, a cheerful motherly lady, two tiny children and—his back to him—the Skipper, himself, trying to feed the smaller of the two with a teaspoon, while the other banged the table with his plate and joyfully gurgled, "Daddy can't feed Baby like Mummy can".

As she drew him away she whispered, "We can make certain of our promotion now dear; let's go in and feed".

The two years at Chatham Hospital went past in a flash; my promotion to three stripes and a "station-master's" hat came along on my sixteenth "Service birthday", and I managed to write a third book of boy's naval adventures. Then, after two months' half-pay I found myself at Barrow, on board H.M.S. *Dartmouth*, to attend her steam trials and join her on commissioning. With my newly gained experience of hospital work and surgery I felt completely "re-fitted", and competent to tackle anything that came my way.

The *Hermione* lay at Barrow at that time while her officers superintended the final preparations of the first big "heavier-than-air" dirigible balloon, facetiously christened "The May Fly", whose nose we could see through the open door of its shed. Only a very short time afterwards she damaged herself badly when being housed after her first mild adventure outside it.

When the contractors finally turned her over to us the *Dartmouth* ran a two-thirds trial from Plymouth to Berehaven, and stripped, first her starboard H.P. Turbine and then her port H.P. She met a very heavy seaway on that passage, and rolled nearly 40° each way, with a "period" of about 10 seconds. We officers lived for'ard under the high fo'c'sle—the first time that any of us had had that experience—and the violence and speed of her rolling was excessively uncomfortable. She flung herself back from her deepest roll without a moment's pause, and so abruptly that one felt that she was as "safe as a house"; but it was physically exhausting. I do remember that her ward-room deck altered its surface continually. I presume that across it happened to run a line of maximum longitudinal vibrations. At any rate, we generally had to shift the card-table from place to place until we found—if we could—a spot where all four legs stood firmly. She was torpedoed under the ward-room when employed in the Adriatic during the war, and an officer sitting in an armchair was thrown up, chair and all, against the deck above.

Our "stripped" turbines kept us at Plymouth until the end of the year when, as the oldest officer on board, I had to strike eight bells to bid good-bye to 1911 while the youngest struck eight to usher in 1912.

When we finally joined up with part of the Home Fleet a Turkish naval lieutenant—Nedjeb—came to us for instruction. Being a torpedo lieutenant he felt some indignation at not being allowed to examine the "innards" of our torpedoes—the 21-inch Hardcastle "heaters"—but otherwise he made himself very happy on board, and was a most interesting messmate. He came of a long line of fighting ancestors, and his uncle had led the cavalry charge at Velistino which caused the final débâcle of the Greeks in the 1897 war. The old gentleman had only been sent forward to "feel" the enemy, and on the impulse of the moment, with a ridiculously inadequate number of sabres behind him, charged the Greek trenches. Curiously enough I had heard, only a short time previously, the full story of that flight from an English doctor attached to the British Red Cross. All through the horrible night that followed, he had been swept along in the wild scramble for safety.

Nedjeb carried with him the family "war" Koran, a little octagonal gold tube some three inches long, inside which hinged, ivory leaves, beautifully illuminated with texts, could be turned back as required. It had been carried by his ancestors for nearly three hundred years of war, and he was exceedingly proud of it.

He told me interesting yarns of "wireless" concession-hunters at the Turkish War Office, of the daily increasing size of the "baksheesh" inside the various contract applications, and the giving of the contract eventually, to the only firm which offered none—an English firm.

He also told me that a Turkish Ordnance Committee, composed almost entirely of Army Officers imbued with German methods, had recently been sent to report on the relative merits of English and German gunnery, and after experimenting with the British *Invincible* and then with a German battleship, had reported that the British system and methods had given better results.

As a result of this report the Turks were soon to order two battleships from English yards, the two which, at the commencement of the war, were bought by the English Admiralty and taken into our service as the *Agincourt* and *Erin*.

Having completed our repairs we joined up with the 2nd Division of the Home Fleet, and followed them down to the Bay of Biscay. Westerly gales had been blowing, off and on, for six weeks and gave an opportunity to test the seaworthy qualities of the new Dreadnoughts *Orion*, *Colossus* and *Hercules*. Off Arosa Bay we met the heaviest swell I have ever seen. It could only be compared with the swell of the Wiltshire downs and was so heavy that the fleet could not go into Vigo—if I remember rightly. At times, when steaming parallel to it and in the trough of the swell, the wireless masts of the ships abreast us, four cables distant, alone could be seen. Scarcely a breeze ruffled the surface of these stupendous seas, so that conditions were ideal for testing the behaviour of the big ships. Most of that wonderfully exhilarating day I clung to the "jack" staff in the bow, fascinated by the glorious spectacle; the sun shone from a cloudless sky, the air was crisp and stimulating, seldom did any spray sprinkle our white fo'c'sle and behind me the *Dartmouth* flung herself about like the overgrown destroyer that she was. At one time, when the big ships steamed straight into the mountainous swell, climbed up it and topped it, I saw the keel of the *Hercules* clear of the water as far aft as her foremost turret before her bows sank and she slid down the far side.

No one doubted their stability after that day's experience.

It was on that day that I first saw the *Achilles* since leaving her at Newcastle after her trials, flinging herself about, burying herself and shaking herself free. When, once, she passed close to us, through my glasses I could see, glittering in the sun, the brass tampions of her guns, with the Head of Achilles I had modelled for her from a cameo in the British Museum.

The whole of the Home, Atlantic and Mediterranean Fleets concentrated during that month in Vigo and

Arosa Bays and no doubt we were not the only people who "counted heads".

Dispersed at last, we proceeded to Gibraltar, and saw, close to Cape Spartel, the wreck of the *Delhi*, split across at the break of the fo'c'sle, and later heard many details of the difficulties of removing the passengers the night she went ashore. It is easy enough to be wise after the event, but they might have remained on board for the next three weeks or more without danger. A small French gunboat had shown great pluck in "standing by", and her tiny steamboat had been toppled "base over apex" and thrown up on the beach. It may be remembered that the Duke and Duchess of Fife and their two daughters were taken ashore that night scantily clad, and that the Duke died a few weeks afterwards.

From Gibraltar we dashed off, at a few hours' notice, to tow up the sloop *Mutine*, lying at Sierra Leone with a broken tail-shaft.

We reached there on a Saturday morning, and the local coloured ministers of all denominations climbed on board to find out how many men would be sent ashore to their respective chapels next day—at threepence a head!

We towed the *Mutine* to Gibraltar at 8 knots—a slow and monotonous business in the heat—and found the usual ship hard and fast on the Pearl Rocks, off Tarifa—a Greek steamer this time. Any suggestions that these rocks might possibly be blown up with dynamite naturally caused much irritation and vexation of spirit to the Gibraltar Salvage Company.

I was now transferred to H.M.S. *Argyll*, commanded by that very delightful Captain, Culme-Seymour, a much larger cruiser than the *Dartmouth* and attached to Admiral Sturdee's 3rd Cruiser Squadron.

On board this ship the officer had a so-called "medicine" ball, a large leather-cased ball, about eighteen inches in diameter, stuffed with horsehair and weighing about eight pounds. Originally introduced in America and used for exercising by throwing from one to another, the *Argylls* played with it a species of Badminton in a court chalked out on the deck and over a rope some five and a half feet high. It made the best and most strenuous method of obtaining pleasurable exercise on board ship, and I quickly became an enthusiast. Every muscle in one's body had had quite enough after three or four sets, scored as in Badminton, and the footwork required the agility of a cat. Three different sizes of ball could be obtained—a five-pounder which was too light, a twelve or thirteen-pounder which we found too heavy for rapid play and the medium eight-pounder which we used. The game spread rapidly through the Navy at that time, but I do not know if it still is popular. I introduced it into my next—and last—three ships with very great success, and during the war, throughout the depressing Dardanelles campaign, the game acted as a grand tonic.

I served until the end of the year in this ship while the German sea menace grew more and more obvious and perturbing. The North Sea would certainly be the centre of the war which must inevitably come, so in the North Sea all warlike exercises were carried out to accustom everyone to the changing atmospheric and climatic conditions prevailing there. Month after month, based on Invergordon or Cromarty, we towed targets for the rest of our Squadron or for the battleships of the Home Fleet; generally in weather so bad that gunnery lieutenants despaired.

In July the House of Commons reviewed us all at Spithead, and on that occasion twenty-eight armoured cruisers steamed out to sea, in a most impressive line, for prolonged manœuvres in the North Sea. The *Argyll* and her sisters were small fry compared to the *Good Hopes*, *Shannons*, the *Indomitables*, or the *Lions*, but they were excellent cruisers, they could maintain 20½ knots as long as their coal lasted, and could fight their guns in a sea way.

Norman Angell's book *The Great Illusion*, caused much heated discussion at this time and, possibly becaused it had received the Kaiser's blessing, was consistently misunderstood. Naval officers, generally speaking, looked upon it as a piece of German propaganda to undermine the determination of the English people to provide money for the Navy. They would not understand that he tried to prove that war had never "paid" and would never "pay"—not even the victor—and that the longer civilization progressed the less the possibility of it "paying". They would maintain that he wanted to prove war to be impossible—and, as everyone knew that it was coming—thought him merely a peace-at-any-price Englishman in German pay.

In October, 1912, on a very dark night we were steaming through the Straits of Dover, and when off that harbour passed a circle of destroyers focussing their searchlights round a diving lighter. Submarine "B-2" had sunk with all hands earlier in the afternoon, and men on the lighter's deck were pumping air down to the divers at the bottom of the sea, working their hardest to endeavour to raise her —if by any chance they could save the crew. It was a very melancholy and soul stirring scene.

On the 2nd October, off Portland, the *Thunderer* and *Orion* gave an exhibition "shoot" before the Admiralty and the greater part of the Home Fleet.

The *Thunderer* had been fitted with a new Director fire-control system. She and the *Orion*, without the latest control system, had previously carried out experiments which incontestably proved the increased efficiency of the new method, and now they once again demonstrated the *Thunderer's* superiority.

The *Thunderer* fired first, at 9,500 yards, while the Fleet looked on, and the "spread" of her absolutely simultaneous salvoes at that range never exceeded 160 yards.

We in the *Argyll* were never far from the battle-practice target, so had an excellent view of proceedings. The *Orion* followed, but had the misfortune to wreck the target with her first few salvoes; however, there was no doubt about the "spread" of her shell—they were not bunched together as were those of the *Thunderer*.

After these two giants had played their part, the *Colossus* disappeared on the horizon and fired at 14,000 yards, and then the *Argyll* towed a target for the *Falmouth* cruiser, to steam at full speed past, 4,500 yards off, and make really wonderful shooting. This day, off Portland in dull threatening weather, with a leaden sea covered with those long lines of leaden-hued ships and the grim menace of war overhanging all, made a very unsettling and disturbing spectacle. It was followed by the grave Admiralty statement of the coming German menace, and the offer of seven millions from Canada to construct three more battleships. We talked and dreamed of war.

On the 1st January, 1913, I was transferred to H.M.S. *Princess Royal*, the *Lion's* sister ship and the fastest of her class—having touched 34 knots, so it was said, on one trial. She had been fitted with ventilating machinery at an enormous cost, and I was more or less put in charge of this to regulate the supply of air as necessary, to record thermometers and hydrometers, take specimens of air from various living spaces, and report to a Ventilating Committee, then sitting, from time to time. The work entailed many hours spent both during the day and the night on the lower deck, and in the three months I spent on board this ship I knew the crew possibly more intimately than in any other commission. It was of no use to wander through a crowded living space and make conjectures as to the relative discomfort or the comfort of the new ventilating arrangements; I had to stay there, and sitting at their mess tables used to yarn to the men and they to me. I think that I learned in these few months more of the innate sense of duty and patriotism which impelled them to put up with their inevitable discomforts, than I had ever known —or guessed—before. Strangely enough, the only people on board who did not, or would not, grasp the fact that this increased supply of air was given for their own benefit were the Engine Room Artificers. They were polite enough, but they concealed with difficulty their annoyance that it did not leave them free to have as much or as little fresh air as they wanted—it interfered with their independence, and they are, as a class, very keen about that.

Very many changes had to be made, for the problem of contriving efficient ventilation with comfort on board these huge ships with no port holes in their sides, is one of the most extraordinary difficulty. It certainly was not adequately solved on the *Princess Royal.*

This ship had a complement of some 800 men, of whom more than half were engine-room ratings. She steamed most beautifully and easily. Running at 25 to 30 knots she scarcely vibrated, but she rolled, in a beam sea, as much as 25° while I served in her, with just that "hang" at the end of the roll which is somewhat unpleasant.

Her 13.5-inch gun mountings were marvellously efficient. I had often watched the old-fashioned 9.2-inch of the *Immortalité* and the 6-inch of the *Ariadne*, trying, with their hand elevating gear, to keep their sights on the target as the ship rolled, and firing only on the upward roll. The *Albion* could only with difficulty keep her turret guns on a target however slight the roll, but the *Princess Royal* could roll her twelve, fifteen or twenty degrees, and the long chases of her turret guns remained absolutely still. Watching "aiming drill" from the shelter deck beneath the fore bridge, and keeping my eyes glued on the guns and the line of the horizon, I could see no movement whatever, and seeing no movement the rolling of the ship was unnoticed.

I took on board with me a "medicine" ball; but in that huge ship it was difficult to get a sufficiently clear deck space in which to play the game. We could, however, find space enough for half a dozen "courts" aft, but we officers lived for'ard, as in the *Dartmouth*. This arrangement alters completely the accustomed appearance of a ship in harbour. Coming alongside in a boat one notices, instead of the spotless stern with one or two officers and a few men on duty on the quarter deck, the ensign hanging down over disfiguring ash-shoots, discharge-outlets scoring the paintwork on her side, and hundreds of men, in all rigs, leaning over the rails, smoking and idling; the impression is one of slack discipline and order; the ship looks slovenly and unkempt.

The "quarterdeck" in the *Princess Royal* was only an undefined deck space near the midship gangway, with none of the dignity of the old days; and the officer of the watch and the quartermaster found it more difficult to supervise efficiently the usual routine work of a ship in harbour.

There may have been better accommodation aft for the crew, and in harbour the men may have been more comfortable; at sea they certainly were not, because the whole after part of the *Princess Royal* quickly became thick with "stokers" from her funnels.

The old arrangement is now re-established, no doubt much to everyone's satisfaction.

The 1st Cruiser Squadron *Lion*, *Princess Royal*, *Inflexible* and *Invincible* was commanded by Sir Lewis Bayly—generally known as "Luigi", a man of great popularity and considered unusually able.

Neither the *Lion* nor the *Princess Royal* had yet received the armoured top of her conning tower, and when the latter went to Portsmouth, in March, 1913, to have her "top" lifted in, I was appointed to H.M.S. *Swiftsure* commissioning to relieve the flagship of the East Indies Squadron.

In eighteen months I had served in the *Dartmouth*, attached to the Atlantic Squadron, the *Argyll* of the 3rd Cruiser Squadron, and in the *Princess Royal* of the 1st Cruiser Squadron—a graduated course which should have given anyone—even a "shore goer"—some considerable insight into naval affairs. In those months I had seen more of the strenuous work of the Navy than in all my previous years afloat, met more naval officers of all descriptions, and heard and talked more of war. Imminent war had become obvious, and I watched the new navy preparing in deadly earnest for it.

The new and accurately running torpedo had drastically changed battle tactics; the effect of submarines, both on strategy and tactics, was the subject of constant discussion, but the influence of existing types of submarines was still regarded somewhat lightly, and theories had not yet taken definite shape. Battle ranges had increased from 7,000 to 10,000 yards; they were to increase much farther; but in spite of the improvement in ordnance, mountings and fire-control, the personal element of the "control" officer and the gun-layers remained an all-important and always indeterminate and changing factor; as the fighting distance increased the rate of hitting tended to decrease though the destructive effects of those shells which *did* reach their targets had increased immeasurably.

Speed had taken the place of the wind'ard guage—almost of seamanship.

The destroyers of one fleet were to neutralise those of the other; the interference of submarine or minelayer, in a fleet action, was scarcely dreamed of.

Reflecting on these times of preparation, it is evident that problems, urgent and vital, problems which had eventually to be solved, were not yet foreseen; the old traditions of fleet actions, handed down from the sailing ship days, still held the imagination, and almost entirely influenced the training; individual ships, individual squadrons and combined fleets worked for that end. Nothing had occurred in the Spanish-American or Russo-Japanese sea-conflicts to shake faith in gunnery as the decisive weapon, and gunnery efficiency retained its dominating influence.

The fleets of England and Germany were expected to meet in the traditional manner and—again in the traditional manner—the fleet action was to degenerate into a general *mêlée*, in which the fleet with the dominating gunnery efficiency and the greater sea experience would maintain its cohesion when the other lost it—and gain a decisive and entirely conclusive victory.

The whole training of the English Navy was devoted to this end—or so it appeared to me.

CHAPTER XV

1913-1914

Commission H.M.S. " Swiftsure "—East Indies Station—Aden—Trincomali—Sick Quarters—Port Blair—The Manipur Executioner—Aborigines—Muscat—Armed Launches—The Sultan of Muscat—Kismet—Arab Diplomacy—Cruising in the Persian Gulf—" Hawking the Great Bustard in Persia "—" The Bull Moose "—The Darya Begi—Ceylon—The Great War—Admiral Jellicoe.

FROM the railway jetty alongside which the *Princess Royal* lay, close to the clamour of riveting as the *Queen Elizabeth* took shape, I walked across to No. 5 Basin between the showers of a bleak March day, dodged the muddy puddles in the dockyard, and saw the *Swiftsure*, my new ship, preparing for her long journey East. Her white-painted sides, among all that drabness and dreariness, conjured up tropical seas, the sharp cut shadows of tropical awnings, the comfort and cleanliness of white uniform and the strange lure of the East.

I felt very content—and ordered two new "medicine balls!"

At the beginning of April she sailed, and when passing into the Straits of Gibraltar two submarines attacked her and hit her amidships. A choppy sea, with a multitude of "white horses" made conditions ideal for them, and we sighted neither until they fired and "broke water".

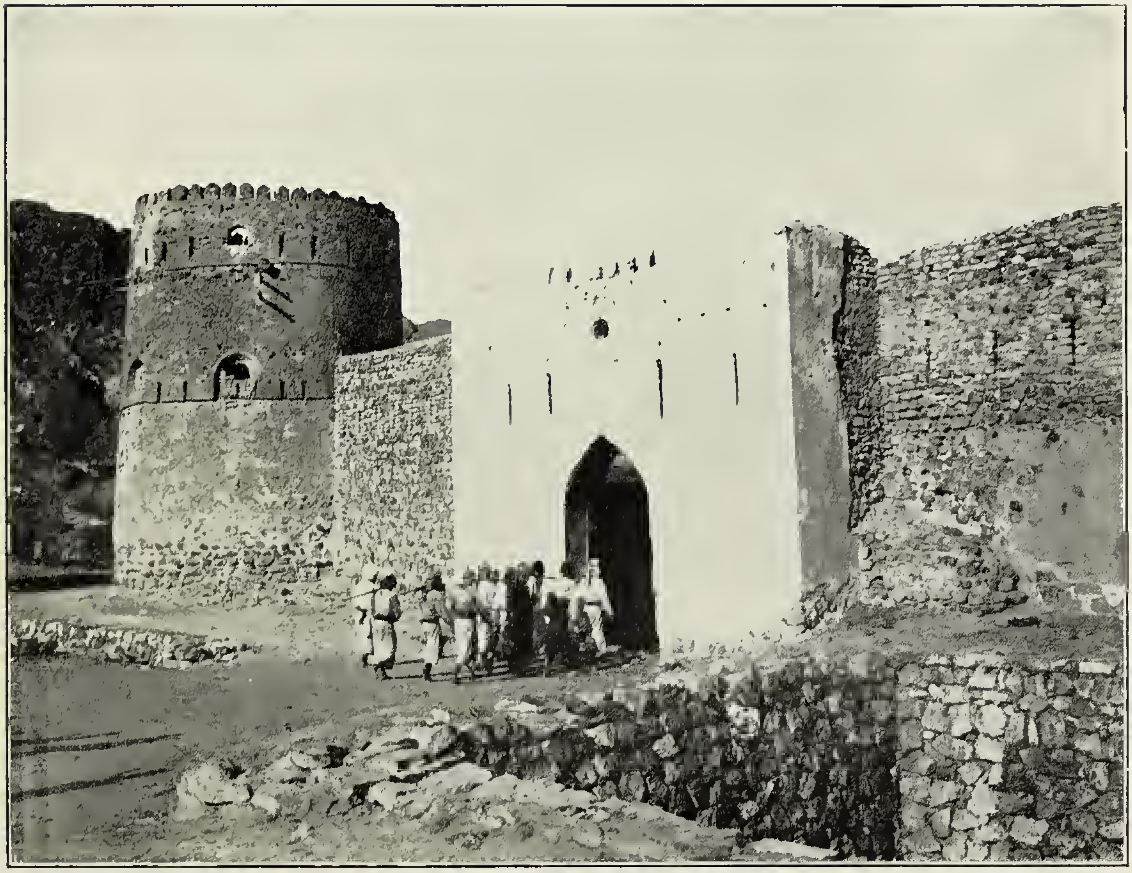
Port Said—white uniforms—hot skies—gathering war clouds almost forgotten—the Canal with all its monotonous fascination—the same fat jovial-looking Frenchmen in the canal dredgers with the same fat jovial-looking women folk—Suez—Aden: it seemed like old times once more.

At Aden we met the *Highflyer*, with the flag of Admiral R. H. Peirse, Commander-in-Chief of the East Indies, waiting at this western limit of the Station to transfer his flag, himself, and his staff to us. I now became Fleet Medical Officer of this Squadron, on the C.-in-C.'s. Staff, responsible for all the medical arrangements on the Station—a Station which lies entirely within the tropics and where the successful prevention of tropical disease—enteric, dysentery and beri-beri—requires constant vigilance.

At the end of April, the *Swiftsure* anchored in Trincomali harbour, in Ceylon, and I "commissioned" the beautiful little Sick Quarters or Naval Hospital, at the edge of the shore, close to the old dockyard which has been closed since the days when Trincomali formed the headquarters of the Navy in this part of the world.

Here I lived in solitary state, looked after by a wrinkled old Tamil butler of aristocratic features while the Flagship carried out her gunnery; the more protracted were these exercises the better I was pleased.

Thirty paces from my dinner table the water of the bay lapped lazily on the red sand of the beach, the view of it scarcely interrupted by a row of Great Mohur trees ablaze with scarlet blooms; the narrow strip of bright green grass at their feet, which separated the beach from the little road in front of the hospital, was generally flecked with the fallen red petals, and I do not think that I have ever seen a fairer sight. In the mornings and the evenings the sky took on the most gorgeous hues; the surface of the sea, the dark



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MAIN GATE OF MUSCAT.

foliage of the forest, even the white walls of the hospital changed their colours constantly. At times, when great thunderclouds, lurid indigoes and bronze, spread up the sky, and the still hot air waited, gasping, for the coming coolness, the surface of the bay shone like burnished copper. Nothing could seem so gorgeous or so peaceful; then the surface of the sea, near the shore, would be broken by the flash of myriads of tiny fish who threw themselves on the beach in thousands to escape pursuing bonitoes, and lay, a quivering silvery line, at the water's edge, until excited crows, gathering in the Mohur trees, dropped down to gorge themselves with the poor things.

Sharks swarmed; the bathing place, a mile away, at the Commander-in-Chief's Dutch residence, had to be palisaded, and they rubbed themselves against the stakes while I used to bathe; once two enormous rays—some twenty feet from fin to fin—leapt a dozen times from the bay in front of the hospital, to fall on their flat bellies with the noise and splash of a twelve-inch projectile; they, too, had their existence made miserable—by parasites which clung to them.

At night wild cats and hyenas screeched and howled, bats and flying foxes (unpleasant creatures) were numerous, and without a stick and a lantern and noisy boots, walking required constant vigilance because of the cobras and ticpolongas which sometimes found their way into the compound.

Above the hospital stood an old fort, abandoned when the dockyard was closed eight years ago, with the jungle now pressing in against it; an inscribed stone, built into the wall below an embrasure, told of a tragedy while minute guns were being fired when the Emperor Frederick William died, in 1861, and a gunner was blown to pieces when ramming a saluting charge into the gun above it.

Along the road towards the sea, hidden from the hospital by the jungle, stood the picturesque dockyard gate. Inside it a dozen coolies and an English caretaker looked after the target gear and a few spare boats—all the stores which remained. Nevertheless, night and morning, the dockyard bell rang, just as in the time when many hundreds were employed and ships refitted there.

No English doctor resided within fifty miles, so the advent of a ship and the opening of the navy Sick Quarters always brought many natives—Tamils, Sinhalese and Moors—for treatment—frequently for operative treatment; every Sunday forenoon the Staff Surgeon (Adshead) use to come ashore and we would have a field-day in the operating theatre.

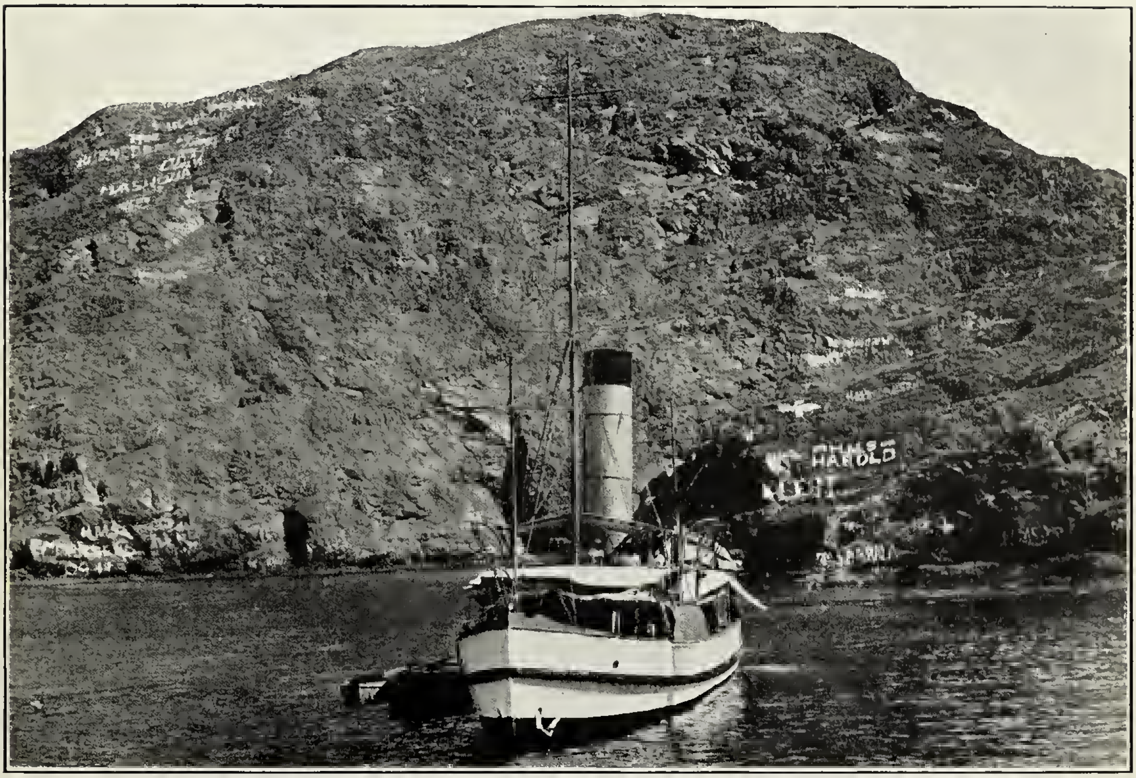
Most of these patient people suffered from chronic malaria, and many, even of the little children, had enlarged spleens making a sharp prominence below their left ribs; for these we could, of course, do little.

The times spent here passed all too quickly, and when the ship left to cruise I used to pack up and rejoin her somewhat reluctantly.

On our first cruise eastward, we called at Port Blair, in the Andaman Islands, with its ugly political prison on a ridge overlooking the settlement and spoiling the beautiful scenery.

We entertained a cheerful little community of officials and soldiers and their wives. These Europen ladies and their children always went aboard under escort of a ticket-of-leave prisoner, armed with a club, preferably a political murderer of high caste, because these were always more reliable.

One lady bought her vegetables from two venerable old gentlemen who came round the settlement twice a week—one, the ex-Regent of Manipur and the other his "chief-executioner", who, so she told me, had actually executed the four British officers



Muscat. Armed Launch "Harold."
Names of ships on rocks.

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treacherously murdered in 1891. She said that both were quite resigned to their exile, but that on the rare occasions when the black flag flew over the prison to indicate that a prisoner had been hanged, the old executioner was always glum and depressed because his services had not been utilised to dispatch him by a more dignified method.

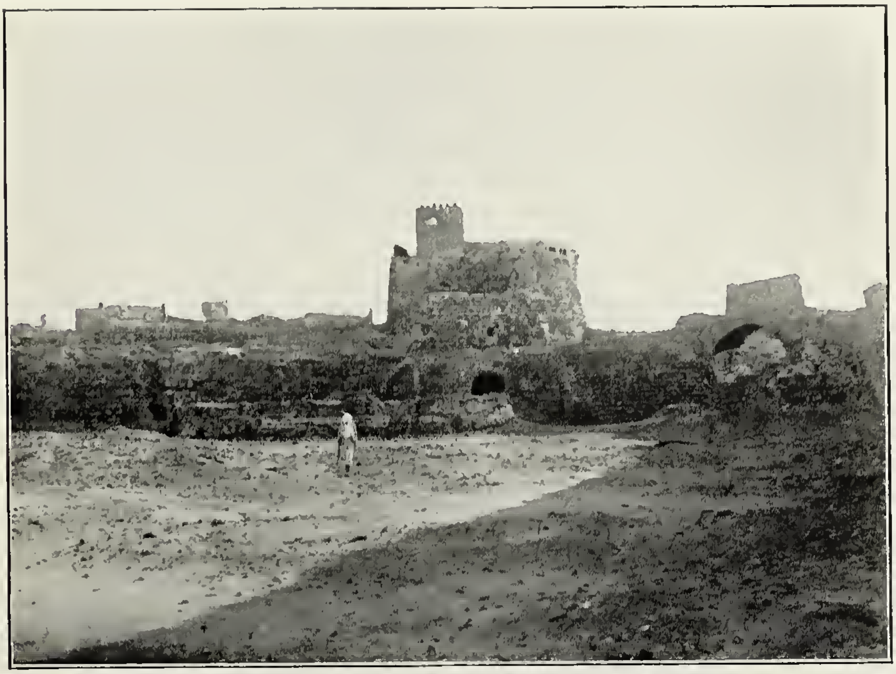
At another settlement in these islands, many aborigines came on board, both men and women, pigmies, copper-coloured and almost naked. The women wore necklaces of panthers' claws, and round their waists, strung on a leathern thong, the skulls of any departed husbands. Most of them had one, some two, but one dear old lady, immensely proud of herself and the proof it gave of her former fascinations, wore five skulls—rattling against each other as she walked—and, for all practical purposes, nothing else.

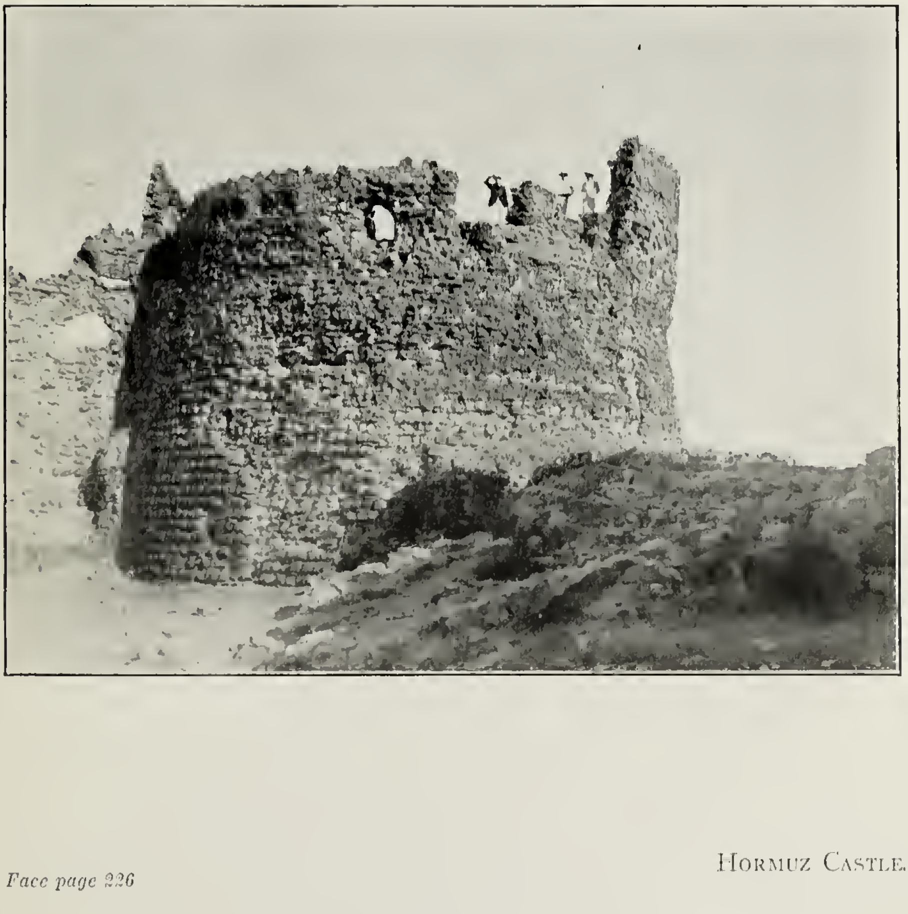
Cruising farther east we visited Perak and Rangoon, where I saw the famous Shwe Dagon Pagoda under possibly its most beautiful aspect—its gilded dome glowing in the sunset against a background of inky thunderclouds. At Kuala Lumpar we spent four busy days of mutual entertaining, and found our hosts a little perturbed because the cost of H.M.S. *Malaya* rather exceeded their original estimate, and the price of rubber had, in the meantime, receded. Then to Singapore, where, on Raffles plain, I again played hockey. I had not played there for sixteen years, and on that last occasion both teams had lined up at half time and stooped down while coolies poured water over us.

In November, 1913, the *Swiftsure* lay in the stifling harbour of Muscat, beneath the two old Portuguese castles, and gathered round her the *Fox*, *Odin*, the armed launches *Harold*, *Miner*, *Mashona* and *Karanga*, constituting the Persian Gulf gun-running preventive service.

These launches, of from 80 to 100 tons, and armed with a three-pounder Q.F., and two maxims, are practically always on active service, supporting the armed cutters of the cruisers patrolling closer in shore, or acting independently. They had had a slack time lately, but generally this service provided many stirring adventures on both coasts of the Gulf. The little *Karanga*—mostly "funnel" and "wireless" —had a crew of a Gunner, petty officer, signalman and five seamen, a corporal and "detachment" of two marines, two native cooks—one a Goanese—and eight lascar stokers, three lascar "drivers" with their own cook, two Karachi boys as officers' servants, a Persian interpreter and a lieutenant in command. Rogers who commanded her then, and had a great reputation in the Gulf for dare-devilry, went down in the *Good Hope* at the battle off Coronel.

Of all places on this Station, Muscat is probably the most interesting, and the two Portuguese castles, with their tiers of guns, cannot but recall the extraordinary chain of historical events which so altered the world's history—the fall of Constantinople and the overrunning of the Eastern Mediterranean by the Turks—the severing of the trade between East and West which followed—the voyages of Columbus westward to find a way overseas to the Indies and regain their trade—the discovering of the Cape of Good Hope passage by the Portuguese—their wresting of the sea-borne trade from the Arabs—their destruction of the Muscat corsairs, and the building of those two castles—the building of the great castle on Hormuz, whence their Viceroy treated with the proud Persian monarchs as an equal—the victory over the Spanish Armada which opened the way to the East, first to the vigorous Dutch, then to the still more vigorous British—and now the sole vestiges of their former glory are these castles of Muscat, of





Hormuz Castle.

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Hormuz, and many a place farther East, to tell the romantic story of the wonderful achievements of Portugal in those far-gone glorious days.

The garrison of one of these forts or castles of Muscat, had mutinied a few months before our arrival, and the two forts had fired at each other for several days, the round shot dropping in the harbour, among the native shipping. Most of their guns were Portuguese, some of them had been bought by them from Spain and bore the cipher of Ferdinand and Isabella; others had once formed part of the broadside of an East India Company's "74", and bore the cipher G.R.

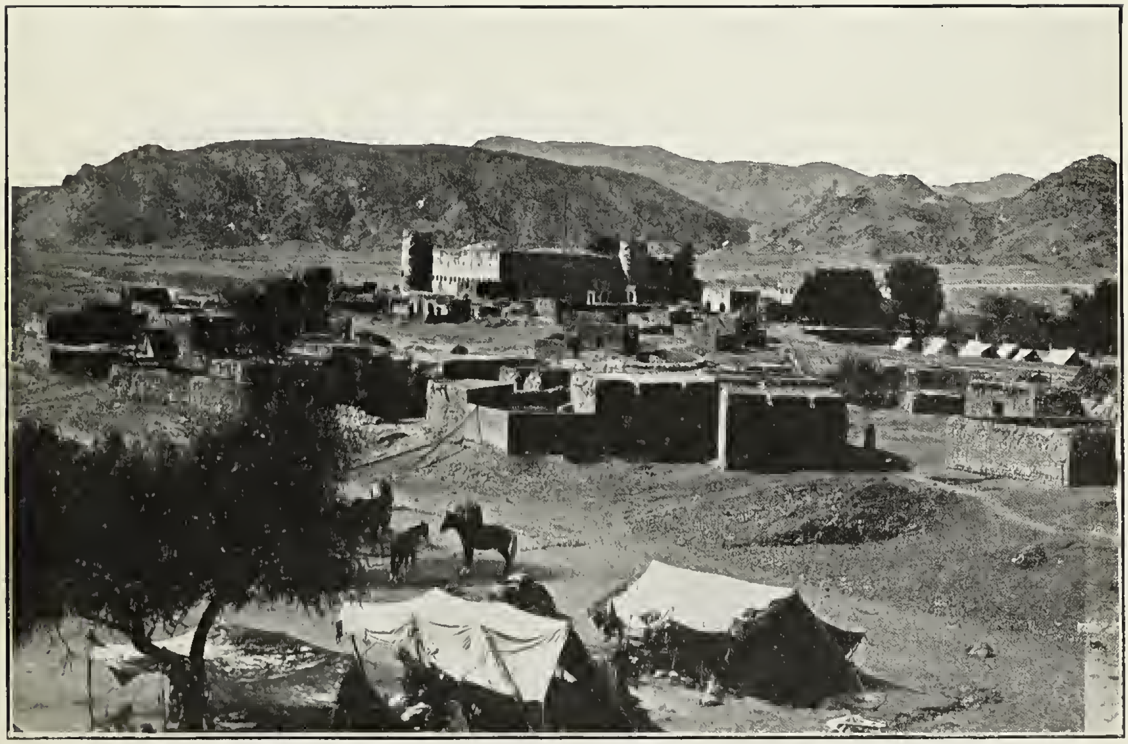
The Sultan to whom the British Government had originally paid a yearly allowance on condition that he prevented the export of rifles from Muscat and other ports under his nominal authority, had died, and the son who had succeeded him returned the Commander-in-Chief's call with his suite, in considerable state, making an extremely picturesque group on board. He was not the rightful heir and, so it was said, lived in constant fear of being "knifed" by an elder brother or his adherents. Perhaps that gave him a dislike of the sight of cold steel, because, as he came up the gangway on to the quarter-deck and a full guard of marines presented arms, he stopped with a look of alarm, and momentarily clutched the handrail. He had never been on board a man-of-war before, and to add to his "welcome" by the marine guard most of their bayonets went "zip" through the canvas of the quarter-deck awning which had been "sloped" a few minutes previously.

His "Vizier", a little ferrety old gentleman, reminded us of the Grand Vizier in the play *Kismet*, and alone among those impassive Arabs showed the least sign of any interest. Behind them stalked two enormous Swahili negroes clad in tiger skins to complete the theatrical semblance.

This weak, effeminate Sultan lived in the old Portuguese "factory", decorated and furnished in the most tawdry manner. He was virtually a prisoner in the walled town, cut off from the interior by barren lava rocks through which one narrow, winding, stone-strewn defile scarcely allowed camels and donkeys to stumble, painfully and slowly, to the plains beyond. The tribes in southern Oman were then in revolt, and a couple of companies of Rajputs —the King's Own 102nd Grenadiers—stationed at his summer palace five miles from Mattarah, the commercial port, round the corner from Muscat, alone kept them from putting his elder brother on the "throne". He had lately determined to put down this rebellion, so had bought two small brass field-guns, some camels to drag them along, and had recruited some three hundred ruffians from Gulf Coast villages to form a striking force.

The British Resident Political Officer, Major Knox, who really "ran" the local political troubles, had all he could do to keep these tribes at a respectful distance and try and mollify them. This hopeless "expeditionary" force only added to his troubles, and shortly before we arrived an incident had occurred which threw back the methods of Arab diplomacy to the thousand gone years to which it rightly belonged.

The young Arab officer of the palace guard one morning, when he opened the gates in the walls, found a girl huddled against the postern, covered with dust and with bleeding feet. Questioning her, he learnt that she was the daughter of one of the leading rebel chiefs, who had treated her so badly that she had fled to Muscat and now claimed protection from the Sultan. The guileless youth escorted her ten-



Sultans' Palace. Village of Bait-al-Falej.
Near Mattarah, Muscat.
The hockey ground lies to the left.

Face page 228

derly to the Royal Harem where, after a "wash and brush up", she turned out to be particularly winsome, and quickly wormed her way into the Sultan's affections. So fond of her did he become that when she assured him, "that if only her father knew how nice a man he really was, he'd be sure to come in and submit", he allowed her to send letters to him. Naturally she gave him information of the two brass field-guns, the camels, the three hundred ruffians, and exactly how they were to be used—and her father did not submit.

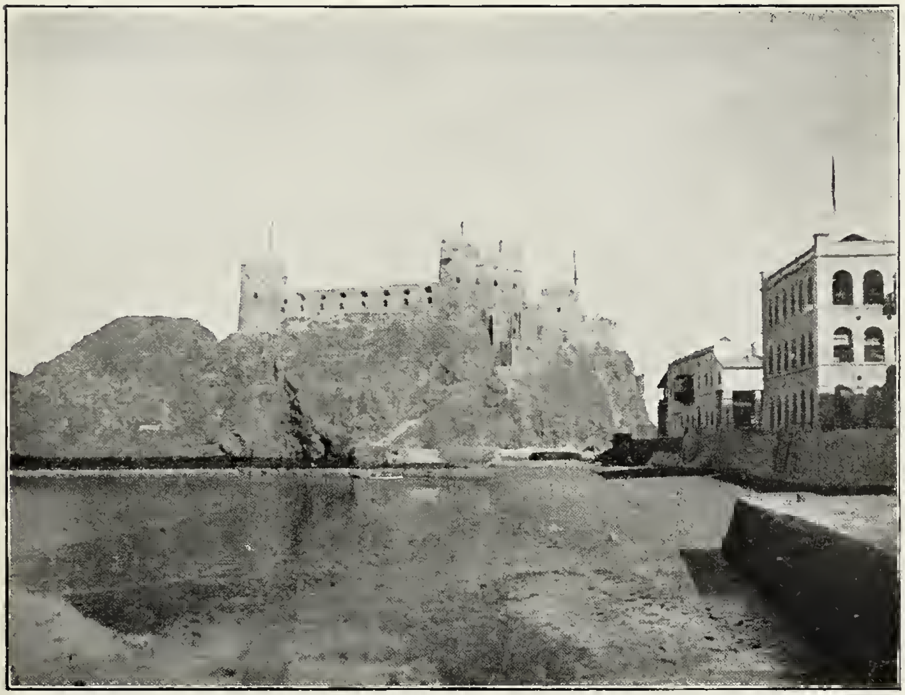
Twice our hockey team pulled round to Mattarah—attended on one of these days by a shark, landed on the offal-strewn beach and rode out to the summer Palace—Bait-al-Falej—on mules sent for us by the Punjabis. On both occasions they beat us; in fact, we never did beat a native regiment at this game, which they play in their bare feet with great and pleasing keenness—very swift, in splendid condition, very hard hitters, well coached and led by their officers. These particular officers had made themselves very comfortable in the palace, a picturesque stone building, standing in the middle of a great Plain, with old smoothbores mounted at the corners of the flat roof, and with a luxurious and highly ornamental stone swimming bath, filled, in better days, by an aqueduct from those mountains on the sky-line, behind which watched the rebel tribes. The upper rooms were cool in the hottest weather, and with the curtains drawn across the entrances, the only light and air came through stone grills in the outer wall. Although the openings in these grills were not less than two inches square, they assured us that flies would not pass through them—and in that part of the world where flies are not, heaven is.

The heat of Muscat is proverbial; it is bad enough in the day time but at night, when there is not the suspicion of movement in the air, when the moist atmosphere is absolutely still, the lava rocks which surround the little harbour radiate the heat they absorbed during the day and it becomes almost unbearable. To add to the difficulty of sleep, all through the night sentries call to each other from the two big forts and from a watch tower inland behind the town, chanting a peculiarly haunting refrain in a minor key, entirely foreign to one's own musical "ear". I once played chess until late at night with the Political Agent, at his house on shore, and these chants starting at Jalali, answered by Merani fort and then repeated farther inland—a few moments' pause, while one listened with strained senses—until Jalali commenced again—these chants seemed to come from just outside the open balcony windows like the crying of lost souls, and quite put me "off my game" at any rate; they afforded a welcome excuse for my lack of success.

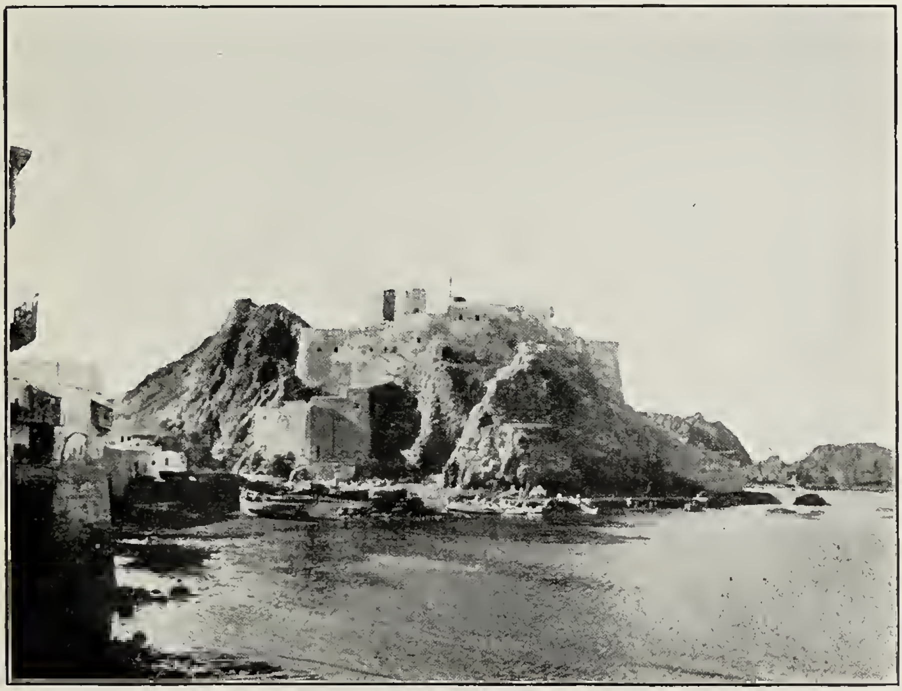
On one night the *Swiftsure* gave a "sing-song" attended by every European ashore and by the crews of the cruisers and armed launches. In the middle of it, when the harbour rang with the choruses sung by eight or nine hundred men, a native agent came off from the palace, in a great state of mind, with the information that a dhow had taken this opportunity to slip to sea with some rifles on board.

I do not remember if she was overhauled—I fancy that she escaped—but the gun-running business from Muscat itself had almost ceased and rifles which still remained in store were supervised very rigidly.

As No. 2 Political Agent, Major Little, seconded from the I.M.S., "ran" a small hospital at Muscat, and his great skill went a long way to maintain and enhance the prestige of the West. He specialised in eye surgery, and patients came to him from hun-



Fort Jelali.
British Consulate in foreground.



Fort Merami.

dreds of miles inland, from all the Gulf ports, and even from India.

On our cruise round the Gulf a few of us saw, for the first time in our lives, a trained hawk at work. We landed at Rishire, close to Bushire, and rode inland on donkeys along the most deplorable stony tracks. They were used to them, and kept their feet much more easily than we kept our clumsy saddles without stirrups, balancing ourselves with our guns. On reaching a vast stony, scrub-covered plain our guide and "falconer" allowed us to walk, much to our relief, and the excited little falcon made several flights after bustard (which could usually be found there) but without success. In fact, after tramping many miles we never saw a living thing, except our own falcon, and marvelled how he could have been trained to come down after every unsuccessful flight, and wait to be enticed to his keeper's wrist with the pelt of a rabbit. We knew nothing about hawking; all we did know was that this special bird had been flying wild only six weeks ago.

Although we did not see a "kill", we heard vivid details of how the little chap would dig his claws among the bustard's feathers and try to sever his spinal cord behind the skull, holding tightly while the big bird tried to scrape him off under a bush, or by revolving round and round, over and over, on the ground in a smother of dust and feathers. Once he got a good grip, however, the end was almost inevitable.

On that day we saw natives using ploughs of exactly the pattern of those in biblical pictures, scratching the surface of the stony soil as they were dragged along by (generally) an ox and a donkey yoked together; one plough had a young camel and a donkey dragging it—a weird looking "team".

Though lacking in actual result, the experience of this sport has, since then, been of great value to me.

Reminiscences

At a dinner party or elsewhere, never to have shot a lion, elephant, a rhinoceros or tiger, has often placed me at a serious disadvantage when those who have done so gently lead the conversation into their required directions.

Formerly I used to endeavour to lower the market value of the lion heroes by telling quite true yarns of a timid little lady I once knew, who went out to a farm in Rhodesia and complained that she had to interrupt her domestic duties, continually, to run out and "shoo" the lions away from the stoep, where the baby slept in his perambulator.

I would then tell the story of her husband and herself driving back from Salisbury in their car, along most execrable tracks; they had to pass a clump of thick undergrowth in which lions often "lay up" during the heat of the day, and just as they passed it they noticed a particularly severe jolt. Presently the little lady sniffed and sniffed again; she mentioned to her husband that there must be lions about, and turning round to see if one might be following them, saw a full grown lion in the back seat on top of all her purchases, trying to steady himself and "hold on" as the car bumped and jolted. She gave him a smack in the face and he leapt out completely unnerved.

These two fairly true yarns were suitable for the average dinner-party lion-hunter, but except that I had once landed at Amoy to try (not very hard) and find (fortunately unsuccessfully) a tiger reported in the hills beyond the town, I had nothing with which to counter the elephant, rhinoceros and tiger heroes.

After my experience of falconry in Persia I was almost always on safe ground if I took the first opportunity of a moment's pause in the conversation to commence, "When I hawked the great bustard in Persia".

" The Bull Moose "

Of course I ran the risk that someone present might know something of falconry, but the stock of the big-game Nimrod usually fell—temporarily at any rate—much below par; and when I went on to tell the story of the much married bustard, out for a walk with his wives—the horrid hawk—the frightened scamper of the hens, under bushes, while the husband swelled out his feathers and circled round, in the open, to attract the hawk's attention from them—the final struggle and his bright young life sacrificed, tears welled to the eyes of the tender-hearted women and strong men gnashed their teeth, either at the hawk—or myself.

On one such occasion when I had carefully removed the dinner table from Africa to Persia, I was only able to limit its travels momentarily because a quiet little Canadian, whose remarks hitherto had chiefly concerned the vagaries of the weather, switched attention to his end of the table by saying gently: "I once had a most interesting experience on the back of a bull moose!"

Away we flew on our magic carpet to an entirely different part of the world, while everyone listened, the Nimrods and the Falconer with undisguised impatience and the remainder, curse them, with rapt attention.

"I happened to shoot a bull moose," the Canadian continued, "and really thought I had killed him; but as I was standing astride his shoulders to cut his throat, he leapt to his feet and, with me on his back, dashed away through the trees. His antlers pressed me back against his haunch so the branches did not sweep me off, and when he came to a lake he took to the water and swam across it. On the opposite side another bull moose challenged him and when they started fighting I slipped off and watched. In a quarter of an hour, they were both exhausted, kneeling face to face, glaring and panting, with horns locked, so that I had nothing more to do than walk up and cut both their throats."

"It's not often you only fire one shot and kill two bull moose is it?" he concluded simply.*

Thereafter the table shivered in the snows of dark Canadian forests, and refused to be warmed in Africa or India—even the invigorating atmosphere of the Persian plains and my bustard did not tempt them away.

Continuing our Gulf cruise, we made a really providential visit to the lonely cable station and coal depôt on Henjam Island. The Store Officer, the Cable Officer and his wife and baby were the only Europeans living there, and the child was dying of dysentery. Almost by accident I had bought some emetine at Bombay before leaving; it was a comparatively new preparation at that time, and a few injections cured the wizened little thing in the most marvellous manner.

Coming out of the Gulf we met the Government Oil Commission at Jask, under the presidency of Admiral Slade. The report which eventually decided future British policy in the Persian Gulf was then in preparation.

To us in the Flagship, this cruise left memories of picturesque natives, romantic ruins of ancient Portuguese glory and wonderful light effects.

To those who have to work there and who have to cruise there month after month, existence in the Persian Gulf is one long drawn out misery of heat, gasping, over-bearing heat, not to be escaped; the romance of the past disappears by contact with the present, and the stricter the gun-running blockade the fewer the "incidents" which break the enervating monotony.

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*This yarn, at any rate, is actually true and the adventure occurred to a man whom I know well.

The Darya Begi

We never met the *Persepolis*, the one ship belonging to Persia, but heard much about her and her Commander-in-Chief, the "Darya Begi", the Governor of the Persian Coast—an immensely fat man who lived at Bushire and seldom stirred out.

It was said that in his youth he had served as a "domestic" on board a British gunboat in the Gulf. A suspected dhow had run up a creek, landed her cargo of rifles inside a large sheik's house or fort crowded with armed men, and the Commanding Officer of the gunboat, which drew too much water to get within gunshot, was puzzled to know what best to do. He had only recently come to this part of the world and did not know the local fighting rules which ran something like this—"give plenty of notice of your intention of attacking a village or a fort—come along at the stated time—exchange shots with the defenders at about eight hundred yards—send in envoys to discuss which side might win if the attack was pressed home—ride off with a ransom, if the decision favoured the attackers, or without one, if unfavourable". Special clauses, almost always honoured, in this unwritten code of rules, prevented rifles being "let off" where they might really be effective.

The embryo Darya Begi knew all about these customs, so early one morning he slipped up the creek with all the seedie boys and lascars from the gunboat, ran up to the foot of the mud walls and fired rifles point-blank at any of the astonished and annoyed garrison who happened to be looking over the top of them. So amazed were they that they surrendered the dhow's cargo of rifles and the young Persian brought them aboard in triumph.

So ran the story which is, I believe, founded on fact. At any rate, the youngster rose to his present position very rapidly, and even now occasionally showed much energy. Recently, some tribes near Lingi had given trouble, burning villages and looting a foreign consulate. The villagers' troubles might have been overlooked, but so much fuss was made about the Consulate that the Darya Begi roused himself, went down the coast in the *Persepolis*, and landed in person—a thing he had not done for many years on account of his extreme obesity. He took with him the brass 9-pdr. field gun from his ship and managed to intercept the brigands with their loot, before they escaped to the hills. He pointed out to them that fighting was a foolish way of deciding anything and that anyhow he had a cannon and they had not—"so what did they think of it?"

Duly impressed, they *did* allow that the cannon made all the difference in the world, so shared the loot with him, went on their way and everyone was pleased.

The gist of this story lies in the fact that the "cannon" had no ammunition!

Only three years ago he had tricked the ablest of the troublesome Baluchi chiefs, Mir Barkhat Khan, into coming on board the *Persepolis* and kept him there a prisoner for many months.

In March, 1914, the *Swiftsure* lay at Bombay to receive Sir Beauchamp Duff on his arrival to take over command of the Indian Army, and on the following day provided a guard of honour when the Viceroy (Hardinge) came to open the new Alexandra Dock.

Down south again, in Ceylon, during that fateful month of July, 1914, we were recuperating in the Naval Camp at Diyatalawa, and had completed some field training exercises with the Ceylon Mounted Rifles, Planter's Rifle Corps, Light Infantry and the 28th Punjabis when the "Stand by" order came from England and we returned immediately to the ship at Colombo.

The Great War

On the night of the 3rd August I slept at the "G.O.H.", and going down to the Custom's jetty early next morning, saw smoke pouring out of *both* of the *Swiftsure's* funnels, saw lighters secured alongside, aft, and officers' chests of drawers and ward-room furniture being lowered over the side into them.

That could only mean War; it had come at last.

On board I saw the telegram, on the ward-room notice board, announcing the appointment of Admiral Jellicoe to the supreme command of the Home Fleet.

This appointment had been expected, and I remember the day at Portland when he hauled down his flag as Commander-in-Chief of the Atlantic Fleet and the assembled ships cheered him. A messmate turned to me as his barge passed towards Weymouth, and remarked, "The next time Jellicoe hoists his flag will be on '*Der Tag*'!"

While he was Second-in-Command of the Atlantic Fleet I had often met him, generally on the hockey field. He played "outside right" for his Flagship, and I played "left, or centre-half", for the *Albion*—and our "meetings" were generally a little violent. He played—as he worked—a quiet, unostentatious, hard, straight-forward game, and if it is possible to judge a man's character by his methods of playing games there is no wonder that he had gained, and that he maintained, the trust and confidence of the Fleet during those terrible months of mental agony which he had now to endure.

CHAPTER XVI

1914-1915

Three Months of Convoy Work—The Defence of the Suez Canal—The Turkish Defeat—A Fusillade—Transfer to "Euryalus"—Bombard the Forts at Smyrna—A Torpedo Attack—The Dardanelles—General Impressions—Landing the Lancashire Fusiliers—Treating Wounded—Spend the Night in the "River Clyde"—Assault on Sedd-el-Bahr—Operating on Board "Braemar Castle"—Submarines Appear—"Sauve qui peut".

DURING the first three and a half months of the war, the *Swiftsure* escorted four convoys of transports from Bombay to Aden. Before the departure of each convoy and while the troops assembled at Bombay, the Yacht Club lost its usual flippant social aspect; indeed, the brave distress of the wives of the departing officers was so poignant that never again can the gaiety of the usual Friday mail-day afternoon tea-parties on the lawn or terrace delete the memory of it.

In those early days the escape of the *Goeben* and *Breslau* caused us a feeling of intense chagrin, even before the ultimate disastrous consequences of the unhappy naval dispositions which permitted them to reach Constantinople were fully realised.

The first convoy sailed three weeks after the declaration of war, and at Kuria Muria Bay saw the masts of the *City of Winchester* showing above water, where she had been sunk by the *Konigsberg*, a few days previously. By this time the *Emden* had commenced her successful career in the Bay of Bengal, and it is interesting to record that the parts these two cruisers played accorded with that anticipated from the Admiralty reports on the personalities of their respective commanders.

In spite of the heavy seas encountered by this first convoy, the adjutant of the 2nd H.L.I. did not lose his sense of humour for he signalled one morning "Field State: 655; Number of Sick, 655." Next day his transport (*Sumatra*) had to haul out of station while we fetched across an acute abdominal case, on which I had to operate immediately, while the *Swiftsure* moved slowly head on to the seas and afterwards caught up her rolling transports.

With our second convoy came the ill-fated Tanga expedition, escorted by the *Fox*. When she and her three transports parted company, the *Dartmouth* went with them to avenge the loss of the little *Pegasus*, sunk by the *Konigsberg* in Zanzibar Harbour. In reply to our signal wishing her luck she replied, "We look upon *Konigsberg* as our personal property", a claim which turned out to be too optimistic.

On arriving at Aden three days later we heard of the sinking of the *Hogue*, *Aboukir* and *Cressy*, and this almost incomprehensible tragedy caused consternation on board; the effect in ships operating in submarine infested areas could only be conjectured.

On our arrival there for the third time, one of those rare thunderstorms which occur but once every two or three years, burst over Aden. The whole sky became black with clouds, the temperature fell to 75°, and a perfect deluge of rain fell for nearly twenty-four hours.

On arriving there for the last time, with our fourth convoy, we learnt that Von Spee's squadron had appeared off Valparaiso and had sunk the *Good Hope* and *Monmouth*. The lonely self-sacrifice of these two ships stirred us very deeply, more deeply perhaps, because during this last passage from Bombay we had expected Von Spee to appear in the Indian Ocean, and knew well that if he had intercepted our huge convoy we should not have been able to safeguard it.

This bad news was relieved by that of the destruction of the *Emden*.

Turkey had now come into the war, and made herself a nuisance by firing from a little battery at Sheikh Said over against Perim; this was, I imagine, her first actual act of hostility. The *Duke of Edinburgh* and some of the convoy went off to capture it immediately; and when we passed next morning on the way to Port Said to defend the Suez Canal, we saw her and her three transports "under the land", where the successful minor exploit had taken place.

At Suez we saw the strange sight of troops entrenched on the canal banks—a very strange sight when seen for the first time—and met many transports with Territorials to replace the regular troops we had escorted from India.

During those months of convoy work we officers beguiled the time with deck hockey and "medicine ball"—when it was feasible to rig the big seine net along the quarter deck—and with chess. At least ten of the ward-room people became enthusiastic chess "experts", and never before or since have I known the game so useful; it diverted monotony and the sombre reflections which filled our minds.

Throughout December, the *Swiftsure* lay at Port Said, assisting the Army to prepare for the defence of the canal while the Turks slowly drew nearer. The French battleships *Requin*, *Charlemagne* and *St. Louis* came to assist, and the First contingent of

Australian and New Zealand troops to arrive, were detained in Egypt. That morning of the 3rd December, when the *Orvieto*, *Omrah*, *Warwickshire*, *Argyllshire*, *Clan McQuorqudale* and *Euripides* slowly passed us with their crowded decks of cheering, virile Colonial volunteers, can never be forgotten. There is no place in the world where scenes such as this can be staged so effectively as in the canal.

The *Sydney* came through and we heard details of her action with the *Emden*; of the first German shell which struck her and carried away her for'ard range-finder without bursting; of the terrible effects of lyddite explosions; of the rapid falling off in accuracy of the *Emden's* shooting, and of the appalling tortures of her wounded, who were taken ashore when that ship beached herself, and as they lay helpless were attacked by huge crabs.

The cruiser *Hampshire* passed through with the *Emden's* survivors; more cavalry came from Bombay and then, on the 8th December, came the great news of the destruction of Von Spee's squadron.

At the end of the year we learnt of the sinking of the *Audacious* in a curious roundabout manner by overhearing the U.S. *Tennessee* passing the information by wireless to her sister ship, the *North Carolina*, as they lay off the Syrian coast doing relief work among the refugees.

That disaster and the blowing up of the *Bulwark* closed the year in gloom.

On the morning of the 29th January, the *Swiftsure*, secured to the canal bank, north of Kantara, fired her first shot in the war, shelling, at eleven hundred yards, a large column of Turks making a demonstration to distract attention from their main attack farther south. Six days later they made a half-hearted attack on this "bridge-head" at night, and at daybreak retreated past us. We fired on them vigorously with both 14-pdr., and 7.5-inch guns without inflicting many casualties, although the poor wretches were too "dead beat" even to run when our shells burst among them. Indian cavalry and infantry pursued them from Kantara, and motor ambulances went out to pick up the wounded—a picturesque sight.

Heavy firing coming from the south, the *Swiftsure* moved down the canal past El Ferdan, where the little "*Clio*" busied herself with a Turk field-battery, shelling her and El Ferdan station, and relieved the Indian Marine Ship *Hardinge*, partially disabled by two 5.9 high explosive shells. Her pilot, Carew, one of the best known of the Canal Pilotage Staff, had had his leg carried off and an arm smashed while on the bridge.

The main Turkish attack between Tussum and Serapeum had been repulsed early that morning, and the following morning at daybreak we went down there to knock out a 5.9-inch gun still giving trouble. We heard a good deal of rifle firing ahead of us as we passed along, and came across many dead Turks, but had not the least idea that a hundred or more live ones had dug themselves in behind the crest of the east bank, and still remained there exchanging shots with New Zealanders, opposite them. Every officer and man who had nothing particular to do had crowded on deck to get a view of the scene of that night's action, when, without warning, a considerable fusillade burst out abreast of us from the east bank not thirty yards away, and bullets rattled against our funnels, cowls and upper works. Fortunately the Turks were too frightened to take deliberate aim or very many casualties must have occurred.

By depressing the 14-pdrs. on the shelter deck we blew a good many of them bodily out of their rifle pits and made the rest crouch down out of sight. A hundred yards farther down the canal I saw a couple of the pontoons which they had brought with them lying half in and half out of the water; and behind them, on the sand, two Turks busy firing their rifles at us. The for'ard 14-pdr. on the sheltered deck, under the fore bridge, killed them with a shell which actually burst in the sand as our stem overlapped the pontoons!

This was really a very curious experience, and the spectacle of those two poor devils, lying behind those pontoons firing rifles at a battleship made one realise their desperate fanaticism or appalling ignorance.

We lost our Chief Yoeman of Signals mortally wounded, but no one else. He, poor chap, had come down the night before into the smoking-room with the signal ordering us to find and destroy that gun, and in great spirits would not hear of any one else going to the mast-head to try and "spot" it.

After these Turks had been "mopped" up by some of our Punjabi friends, we returned and "tied up" there, with many dead Turks scattered along the banks, ahead and astern of us. Presently our lascars "fell in" to see the Commander and ask permission to land and perform the necessary burial rites on their co-religionists. Permission being granted, off they went to one end of the scattered dead, buried one and then started looting; meanwhile our "seedie" boys, not to be behind-hand in religious fervour, obtained permission to assist, and away they went to the *other* end of the line—and did exactly the same thing. Both parties were hurriedly brought back.

Then I myself went ashore with a party of stretcher-bearers and brought a good many wounded down to the canal, searching the area for a mile or two behind the banks. As far as I could judge most of those I brought back were Syrian Christians: one wounded officer, who could speak French, implored me not to hand him over to the Army, though why I could not understand.

As a French linguist I always fail badly and when, next day I had to go aboard the French *D'Entrecasteaux* and thank her Skipper for looking after two officers of "T.B. 043" wounded during the attack, I informed him that the Admiral would send a "torpedo" to take them away. The amused French Captain suggested, gravely, that as they were both wounded a "torpedo *boat*" might be more convenient!

The attack on the canal having failed, the Admiral shifted his Flag from the *Swiftsure* to the cruiser *Euryalus* and took me with him on that very unpleasant business of making a demonstration before Smyrna. The *Swiftsure*, *Triumph* and five mine-sweeping trawlers came with us, a force too small to distract attention from the coming attack on the Dardanelles, and too weak to destroy the defences of Smyrna or compel the Vali to promise not to allow Smyrna to be used as a submarine or torpedo base.

It is strange how, even in war time, antagonism develops between ship's companies. The *Triumph* had come from the successful capture of Kiaochow and met her sister ship the *Swiftsure* at the Dardanelles. Her men talked more than the *Swiftsure* thought necessary about their war experience in the East. They argued that because their Paymaster had had his leg carried away by a shell while in the fore-top, that gave them a greater claim than the *Swiftsure's* 9-inch shell, bursting in the wardroom, gave her. Much coolness sprang up between the crews, and when, some months later off Cape Helles, the news was shouted down the mess-deck while the *Swiftsure's* were at dinner, that the *Triumph* had been torpedoed, they went up on deck, watched her heel over, and as they went down again to finish their dinner one man was overheard to say, "A bit of a swim won't do those —— gasbags any harm!"

To return to the Smyrna "show", the three ships fired for three hours at very long range at the very prominent but entirely useless fort of Yeni Kali without the Turks taking the least notice of us; but when the trawlers went in next morning to sweep a channel through the mine field, they quickly drove them off, and as we moved in closer to protect them opened fire from a large number of concealed gun positions. All three ships were hit repeatedly, and withdrew. At least seven 5.9-inch shell struck the *Euryalus*, two bursting in the stokers' mess deck, wrecking it, and starting several fires and wounding six people who had no business to be there. Our funnels, cowls and boat decks were riddled, and the wireless aerials shot away.

I know that I spent a most unpleasant afternoon down in her stifling, over-crowded fore-cross passage —my "dressing station" (!)—sitting with my back squeezed against the inner bulkhead of a wing bunker, keeping my legs out of the way of the sweating ammunition "numbers" as they dashed backwards and forwards out of the fore-and-aft passage from casemate-gun hoists to magazine supply-hatches, while the black powder smoke from those two shells and the smoke from the fire on the mess-deck filled the fetid atmosphere, and the coal jumped about behind me and banged up against my bulkhead whenever a shell struck the armour belt on the other side of the bunker.

I had been ill for some days, had a high temperature that afternoon and should have felt a "worm" under normal conditions, so did not enjoy myself.

The guns which fired on us could not be "spotted", so the three ships withdrew out of range for the night, and though the *Annie Rickmers*—a captured German steamer—brought along a couple of French seaplanes, these were either unable to rise or when they did were unable to fly high enough to locate them.

For the next three days the ships fired a large number of rounds without doing any damage, except to the old-fashioned silent fort, and an attempt to sweep a channel through the mine-field at night resulted in the blowing up of one of the trawlers.

A truce having been arranged with the Vali of Smyrna, negotiations took place and failed. In the middle of it a torpedo boat which had been hovering about for two days fired a torpedo at the *Euryalus* at the unpleasant hour of 2 a.m., on a cold night with half a gale blowing. Fortunately for the *Euryalus*, the erratic weapon struck the *Annie Rickmers* and blew a hole some twelve feet square under her starboard bows.

The Vali could not be blamed because he knew nothing about the torpedo boat or the torpedo boat about the truce; but that did not make things any more comfortable.

The *Swiftsure*, *Triumph* and *Euryalus* were at anchor with banked fires so could not get under way for more than an hour; no one knew exactly what had happened; the big Turkish search-light lighted us up sufficiently for whatever had fired that torpedo—torpedo boat or submarine—to come back again; and from out of the darkness came the cries of the Dago crew as they fought for the boats and tried to escape from the *Annie Rickmers* as she settled down by the bows.

Our wounded had been sent across to that steamer, so even when we had steam in our engines we had to stay there while they were being brought back to us; and for nearly two dreadfully long hours we tramped her upper deck, backwards and forwards, with our swimming collars round our necks waiting for something to happen.

Swimming belts had not yet been supplied, and at any other time the sight of four or five hundred officers and men with those ridiculous collars blown up round their necks would have not been devoid of humour.

The *Annie Rickmers* for'ard bulkhead "held"; she remained afloat and we eventually cleared out. That was the end of a very futile undertaking which, if it had any effect at all, effectually cured the Vali of any pro-English proclivities he may have had.

The *Triumph* and *Swiftsure* hurried off to take part in that disastrous attempt of the 18th March to crush the Dardanelles defences and we, in the *Euryalus*, returned to Port Said to effect repairs.

Admiral Sir Richard Peirse remained there in charge of the canal, and we found ourselves quickly drawn into the maelstrom at Mudros with the task of landing the 1st Lancashire Fusiliers at Cape Helles on that glorious but ill-fated 25th April.

Admiral Rosslyn Wemyss hoisted his flag in the *Euryalus*, and she became the connecting link between Army Headquarters, in the transport *Arcadian*, and the naval Commander-in-Chief (de Roebeck) in the *Queen Elizabeth*, with the result that the ship was the *rendezvous* of many officers, both naval and military, from whom I had unusual opportunities of ascertaining news of the course of events and the prevailing opinions on the prospects of the coming expedition.

No one seemed to doubt that the army could be landed, but subsequent success depended entirely upon the possibility of rapidly seizing—and holding—

the crest of Achi Baba, a 700 feet high hill, five miles from the end of the Peninsula. Its summit dominated the whole system of gun positions on both sides of the Dardanelles at Kilid Bahr and Chanak, and once the 15-inch howitzer already at Mudros with its tractor and railway lines, could be mounted there and brought to bear on that system, its destruction was anticipated in a few days. The Fleet would then be able to force the Dardanelles, and the Bulair defences would become untenable. Beyond that stage no one of any experience or whose opinions were of any value, ventured an opinion.

I formed the impressions immediately prior to the 25th April, that most naval officers considered the expedition hopeless, that it was too late, that the initial bombardment had been a mistake, that the Turks had been given too long to prepare their defences, and that the number of effective troops who could be thrown ashore was entirely insufficient. The results of the 18th March had proved once again that men-of-war were not capable of crushing guns mounted in modern forts; and they pinned their only hope on the possibility of so supporting the attack on Achi Baba that its seizure would be rapid.

The influence of mobile guns efficiently handled on shore had not yet come into prominence—as it did later on; the fixed defences were quite enough to occupy present attention and their destruction by that 15-inch howitzer was the crux of the situation.

I gathered the impression that army officers did not consider their forces strong enough; that the reserves "in sight" were not sufficient and that, for all practical purposes, if Achi Baba were not seized in the first twenty-four hours—by night-fall said some—the expedition would fail. Unused to such amphibious undertakings they relied too confidently on the Navy supplementing their lack of numbers and lack of guns, and being able to cover their advance.

Put concisely, army officers, without knowledge of the limitations of ship's gunnery, counted the ships' guns, and depended for success with a confidence in them which the Navy did not share.

Success meant—at this stage—the rapid capture of Achi Baba.

Both realised that however grand the inception of the Great Idea, its fruition had been delayed too long, and that they had to bow to the exigencies of political necessity—and do their best.

If I interpreted it rightly, a general spirit of pessimism prevailed when dawn broke on the 25th April—not as to the possibility of affecting a landing, but as to a subsequent successful advance.

The Lancashire Fusiliers had come on board the *Euryalus* the night before, off Tenedos, where the whole Armada lay at anchor. If their officers did not have the best dinner they had had since leaving England it was not our fault, and the crew did their best to entertain the men on the lower-deck. The younger officers gathered round the ward-room piano and started a sing-song. They begged for just one more song at eleven o'clock and sang "John Peel", many of them singing for the last time; and then we made them as comfortable as possible for the night, while the whole expedition steamed slowly across to the mouth of the Dardanelles.

Breakfast at half-past three; and the ship stopped her engines for the "tows" of transports' boats to come alongside. Down into these boats the men filed; and as each stepped down the ladder a bluejacket put a cigarette between his lips and lighted it for him. They took their places in the twenty-four boats and started towards the shore.

It was now a quarter to five on that Sunday morning, the greyest of shadowy dawns; the formless clouds were grey; a darker streak of grey three miles away where grey sea and sky met, was Cape Helles and three grey patches darker still, were the *Swiftsure*, *Cornwallis* and *Albion* close inshore, waiting to commence the bombardment.

Slowly steaming up the Straits, towards Sedd El Bahr, the *River Clyde* drew clear with her attendant lighters, steamboats and transports' boats. Behind us followed a host of transports, storeships, battleships and cruisers, French as well as English, and an innumerable shoal of smaller craft.

At 5.3 a.m., the preliminary bombardment broke the stillness, and quickly enveloped the end of the Peninsula in a cloud of smoke from bursting shells. The sun, rising over the shoulder of Achi Baba, lighted up this cloud and, shining in our eyes, made accurate shooting impossible—a disadvantage which had been foreseen, and now detracted enormously from the ability of the ships' guns to destroy the machine guns and rifle pits on the cliffs, or the barbed wire entanglements on the beaches below them.

The *Euryalus* anchored 2,000 yards from Helles (eventually 900 yards), and we watched the boats with the Lancashire Fusiliers disappear into the smoke cloud. A few minutes elapsed and then a very fierce fire of rifles and machine-guns commenced.

We could see nothing of the drama taking place beneath the smoke, and when some boats began to emerge from it pulling frantically, amid hundreds of bullet splashes, we thought—at first—that the landing had failed. Then we saw they were empty of soldiers, and as they struggled out that they were pulling with only three, or two—some with only one oar! The smoke lifting slightly as the battleships paused to raise their sights and get a view of their targets, we saw the line of dead among the rows of barbed wire on the beach, groups of men darting from rock to rock, trying to scale the cliffs, and the Turks leaning over the edges of their trenches firing down at them.

The *Swiftsure* reopened fire with extraordinary accuracy, and before the cloud of her bursting shells hid everything again, we saw a small party of Lancashire Fusiliers, who had landed on the extreme left, running along the top of the cliffs towards the Turk trenches.

Steam boats, dashing inshore, towed away the disabled transports' boats and brought many alongside us, full of dead and wounded. From seven a.m. until nearly ten o'clock that night, Dr. Devereux Marshall, Staff Surgeon, R.N.V.R. (of the Moorfield Eye Hospital) and myself worked without ceasing. The whole of one side of our battery-deck became crowded with wounded; and in the sick-bay, under the foc's'le, it almost was impossible to move about until many of those brought there, in the first rush, died and were carried aft. To add to our troubles, the ship went to action-quarters, skylights and deadlights were screwed down, the electric light failed when the 9.2-inch overhead commenced firing, and we had to work for some time by candle light.

Only occasionally during the rest of that day, when I had to go aft to where some officers lay wounded, did I have a chance of observing for myself how things were going; but long before half-past three, when the last efforts had been spent in the capture of Hill 138, it was obvious that any advance inland was entirely out of the question. News came from Anzac that the Australians had spent themselves on their first mad rush, and were now clinging desperately to the high ground they had won; at "X" and "Y" beaches the troops clung as desperately to the edge of the cliffs they had scaled; and the remnants of those Dublins and Munsters who had got ashore, from the *River Clyde*, could be seen huddled under a small ledge at the top of "V" beach. It was now not a question of advancing but of connecting up with the separate "landings"—and of the ability to hold the little ground which had been won.

The glorious episode of gallantry had succeeded, but the Dardanelles Expedition at half-past three on the 26th April had definitely failed.

By five o'clock firing died down; by ten o'clock scarcely a sound came from the end of the Peninsula except that, down at Sedd-el-Bahr, one could see a fitful glare in the darkness, and the breeze brought from it the sound of constant machine gun and rifle fire.

Trawlers sent down during the afternoon to bring away her wounded, had been driven off before they could complete their work, so at half-past ten —being the doctor of the "liaison" ship—I was ordered to go down and see what I could do.

On reaching her, just before midnight, with Marshall and Haggar, the Chief Sick Berth Steward, we clambered through one of the gangway ports cut in her sides, into the pitchy darkness within, and started to light a lantern; but we were immediately assailed by hundreds of angry voices demanding us to put it out as any light drew fire both from the Turks on the overhanging cliffs on the port side and the low parapets of Sedd-el-Bahr fortress which jutted out on her starboard side.

I soon ascertained the impossibility of moving her wounded: in fact, I had to send the steamboat back to the *Euryalus* and bring the crew of the wounded launch on board on account of the heavy rifle fire; but during quiet intervals I did what little could be done to those (already dressed) lying under the gunwale on the upper deck, and spent the whole of that extraordinary night on board the *River Clyde.*

At about two o'clock in the morning we heard that the Turks were preparing to "rush" the ship, and I had to shift my feet from where I was sitting, to allow some of our people to lie down with their bayonets and rifles sticking out of the gang-port, in case any of them came along the platform, our way. The maxim battery in the bows made at that time the devil's own noise, and our nerves were somewhat on edge, when suddenly piercing shrieks came from above; we heard a violent clatter of many heavy boots running aft on the deck overhead, yells of "The Turks are on us", and a half-naked blood-stained figure appeared at the top of the cargo hatch, silhouetted against the clouds, and threw himself down, yelling that the Turks were bayoneting everyone on deck!

For some reason or other, I grasped the fact that this man was delirious, so seized him and tried to draw him away from the open gangway out of rifle fire; but he tore himself free, and still shrieking, scrambled down into my "wounded" launch alongside—under fire, coiled himself up in the stern sheets and went sound asleep!

It was rather a tense moment.

At the first trace of dawn I went on deck to make preparations for bringing down the wounded who still lay there on stretchers and met an exuberantly cheerful subaltern of the Armoured-Car Section of the R.N. Division. He pointed to the cliffs overhanging the port side of the ship (in that half-light they *appeared* to overhang the ship though, actually, as distant as the National Gallery is from Nelson's Column) and remarked genially, "Those chaps up there can't shoot for nuts; walk about over here: I bet you a dollar they won't hit either of us!"

These cliffs looked so close that I should certainly have pocketed two dollars if I'd taken his bet, but allowed the "certainty" to slip by.

We looked for'ard over the side at the towers and bastions of the mediæval castle of Sedd-el-Bahr, growing distinct in the increasing light, and he was pointing out one of the towers as a nest of the machine guns which had done most of the damage yesterday, when it was hidden by a terrific explosion. The roaring shock literally struck us; it shook the *River Clyde* violently under our feet, another followed, and when we looked again nearly the whole of that tower had disappeared; a huge breach showed up in the curtain wall, and turning to the harbour we saw my former ship, the *Albion*, fire again from her fore-turret guns; more explosions of her 12-inch lyddite roared and more gaps appeared in the masonry.

This diverted the attention of the snipers on the cliffs, and we got the wounded down below.

Directly afterwards I came across Commander Unwin, commanding the ship and the originator of this landing scheme. He had won the V.C. by his extraordinary bravery on the previous day, but looked none the worse for the terrible ordeal. Going for'ard, I met Colonel Tizard, of the Munsters, the Senior Military Officer, on board. He and I looked over the starboard bow, down on the beach below, where our men clustered under the débris of the battered castle walls, most of them men who had been landed after that scare of the Turks attempting to board had subsided. As we watched them gradually collecting at the feet of those breaches, an army signal-flag, under the walls, wagged backwards and forwards, and the army signalman behind us spelt out, "Ready to advance as arranged."

Colonel Tizard said, "Tell Colonel Doughty-Wyllie to carry on"; the flag flip-flapped behind us, bugles sounded on the beach below, and in a moment it became alive with men swarming up the breaches, creeping to the barbed wire across them and trying to cut the strands.

Rifle and machine-gun fire burst out again; I saw some of our people scrambling over and through a breach, and then I had to take this opportunity of getting away the wounded.

I took them to the hospital ship *Sicilia*, and by the time I eventually returned to the *Euryalus* I had been at work, on and off, without sleep for twenty-nine hours—the most strenuous and remarkable twenty-nine hours of my life.

I slept very soundly that afternoon, and missed seeing the capture of Hill 141, which finally gave us precarious possession of the end of the Peninsula.

Hunter-Weston and his Divisional Staff lived on board the *Euryalus* until the 28th April, when they finally landed to direct the general advance on Krithia village. By the end of the day the English on the left and the French on the right, held a position across the Peninsula some three and a half miles from Cape Helles—and for all practical purposes no further advance was made during the campaign.

Thereafter the Expeditionary Force contributed its influence on the general war situation only by containing large and increasing forces of the Turkish Army which otherwise might have been employed elsewhere.

Of all the bold and original ideas, that of Commander Unwin's for landing troops from the *River Clyde* should have met with most success. That it did not was due, to a considerable extent, to two minor misfortunes.

A surface current always sets out of the Straits, but it was thought that it would not be felt in the little bay formed by the sea bastions of Sedd-el-Bahr.

Unfortunately it *did* sweep round into this bay and the *River Clyde* (whose engines had been stopped) took the ground a little to the west'ard of the desired position and *farther* from the shore than she would otherwise have done.

The second misfortune followed the jambing of a tow-rope round the towing-cleat of a steamboat. Definite instructions had been given how to secure these ropes, but in the excitement of the occasion this one had been made fast by a hitch which jambed and could not be released when the towing steamboat went astern. Instead of that lighter shooting forward into the desired position, ahead of the *River Clyde*, her bows were hauled round, and vital minutes went by before she could be brought back to help form the connecting link to the shore.

On such apparently trivial details did success or failure depend.

By the evening of the 28th April casualties had so far exceeded those expected that the three hospital ships off Helles could receive no more cases. Transports were therefore set aside as "hospital carriers", "cleared" as soon as they had disembarked their troops and provided with a skeleton medical staff consisting—in those ships I visited—of civilian doctors and St. John Ambulance men in R.A.M.C. (T) uniforms and one or two regular R.A.M.C. Sergeants.

These "carriers" were suitable and suitably staffed to treat light injuries and to transport more serious cases to Alexandra or Malta, after operative treatment. But owing to the absence of any other facility for evacuating the enormous number of casualties which followed the two unsuccessful attacks on Krithia village, on the 28th April, and the 6th, 7th and 8th May, every variety of case, light or serious, had to be sent to them—there was nowhere else where they could go. For such purposes they proved, naturally, entirely unsuitable, but to blame the army doctors or their administration—as many did—was childish. With equally good reason one might have blamed the General Commanding the Artillery because his guns had to economise their expenditure of ammunition. An Admiral listening to the harrowing details supplied to him by two young and inexperienced chaplains, took the matter into his own hands with somewhat unexpected "boomerang" effects; but as a result, I and several other naval doctors were sent on the morning after the 2nd attack of Krithia had definitely failed, to assist the Army.

I worked that day on board the *Southland* and *Bræmar Castle*, hospital carriers, and found conditions indeed deplorable and pitiable, but what else could be expected in ships which were transports one day and trying to do the impossible work of a Hospital Ship the next, without the necessary equipment and without the necessary personnel.

The fault lay in the entirely inadequate medical equipment of the Expeditionary Force; not on those who were struggling to do the best they could in the circumstances which confronted them.*

On the table in the 2nd Class Smoking-Room of the *Bræmar Castle*, Marshall and I operated continuously for twelve hours on cases requiring urgent operations, under conditions which can better be imagined than described. The Territorial doctors on board and their St. John Ambulance men had

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*Later on in this Dardanelles Campaign, when sickness increased enormously. there *was* ground for criticising the system of evacuating sick and wounded from the Peninsula ; but by that time the means of transport under R.A.M.C. control and the provision of hospitals and supplies had become relatively adequate—a very different state of affairs from that existing at the time of the original landing. Surgeon Vice-Admiral Sir James Porter was then sent out by the Army Council, with full authority ; and, in spite of every difficulty, initiated an organisation and methods which, thereafter, worked satisfactorily.

been working without a pause for the last twenty-four hours, and the stretcher-men who brought the cases to us towards the end were dazed with fatigue and want of sleep.

At eleven o'clock that night I made a final tour of the ship and found an officer huddled in a corner with a serious abdominal wound. He should have been one of the first brought to me but had watched, hour after hour, while others were carried past him, and had not attracted attention to himself because he knew that his wound was mortal and that operation on him would only delay the work of succouring others!

On the 22nd May the periscope of a submarine passed across our bows as we lay off Cape Helles. This submarine evaded pursuit, but her appearance sufficed for an almost general *sauve qui peut* of transports and storeships, battleships and cruisers—(such as could be spared). The *Euryalus* "legged it" with the best back to Mudros, and except at a distance, this was the last I saw of Helles, and Sedd-el-Bahr.

Two days later that submarine returned and sank the *Triumph* off Gaba Tepe and on the 28th the *Majestic* off Helles. After these two disasters no other battleship anchored off the Peninsula until the Suvla landing—and then only behind submarine net-defences.

A SUBMARINE SCARE.
Blowing up safety waistcoats.

CHAPTER XVII

1915-1916

Transferred Back to "Swiftsure"—Suvla Bay—Reflections—"Hero" of a "Tactical Idea"—Casualties on Board—"To Annoy Fatima"—The Battle of 21st August—The Scottish Horse—Flies and Dysentery—Stalemate—A Blizzard—Evacuation of Peninsula—Bombardment of the Three Railway Trucks—The "Goeben" and "Breslau"—Sudden Orders—Gibraltar—The Cork Woods—Cape Verde Islands—England.

AFTER leaving Cape Helles towards the end of May, I did not return to the Peninsula until the 9th August. Meanwhile I had been re-transferred to my old ship *Swiftsure*, in which the Rear Admiral in charge of the naval forces assisting the 9th Army Corps to land at Suvla Bay, hoisted his flag.

This battleship arrived there on Monday morning, fifty-seven hours after the first troops had been thrown ashore on the previous Friday night; and as she passed through the "gate" in the submarine net across the bay, we saw shells bursting near the water's edge and a very large number of soldiers on the beach, many of them bathing.

The reports which we had already received, although far from optimistic, had not prepared us for the state of affairs that we now found and we recognised even before we anchored that this expedition, on which such great expectations had been founded, had already failed.

It needed no military genius to recognise the fact; eight miles inland lay the gap in that semicircle of hills which the 9th Army Corps should now be holding—and enemy guns, *this* side of it, were shelling the beaches!

For three months, with scarcely an interval of rest, the *Swiftsure* remained at Suvla or in its vicinity, and—as at Helles in the *Euryalus*—officers of the army were constantly on board. From them and from our own people employed on transport duty on the night of the landing, I heard accounts of what actually happened, told from so many different angles, that it was difficult to avoid the conclusion that the 9th Army Corps (10th, 11th and 53rd Division) as constituted, was not a suitable fighting machine to essay the task that had been set it—probably the most difficult of all military problems.

Many of its units, so it was said, were Territorial battalions who had been doing garrison duty and had received scarcely any "field" training since the war began; of brigade training many had had none, of divisional training none whatever. Battalions, brigades with their staffs, divisions with theirs, had never worked together until they tried, in the darkness of that night, on the shore of Suvla Bay, to bring order out of confusion—the confusion and uncertainty and indecision which must inevitably attend such an operation.

Five miles away—two villages; eight miles away—hills whose crests they should find and occupy; eight miles across unknown, untrod ground with the flicker of rifles and the whistling of bullets already coming out of the darkness! Is it any wonder that the Corps so constituted lost its driving force, that some battalions, extricating themselves from the confusion of that beach, carried out orders and pressed hard inland, tried to keep in touch with others that boldly did the same—and disappeared.

Of some scarcely a man came back; the very place of their slaughter was never known until after the war; Anafarta was seized and held by battalions who next morning looked in vain for support and presently fell back decimated, overwhelmed by troops the Turks rushed up to attack them.

As the weeks dragged on deserters who gave themselves up, prisoners and spies—both men and women—who were captured, were found wearing the badges of those men who had so gallantly marched to their death—and that was the only trace of them.

And all through that night of confusion and individual gallantry, far away on Imbros Island, the Commander-in-Chief of the Dardanelles Expeditionary Force listened with his ears to the telephone. That the organiser of great battle struggles and strategic movements should not allow himself to be distracted by the sights and sounds of the isolated combats he has planned, may be a military axiom; but the simultaneous complementary advance from Anzac was made by war-tried veterans under war-tried leaders—the Suvla *coup de main* was not; and did ever a Commander-in-Chief, throughout that melancholy Dardanelles Campaign, lose such an opportunity of exercising his leadership on the field where it was so urgently required?

To return to more trivial matters, the Rear-Admiral had been on board H.M.S. *Jonquil*, with the Corps Commander, since the landing and he and his staff now returned to the *Swiftsure* with a little tactical scheme—a little surprise landing of their own planning—in which I was cast for the hero's part.

The tactical idea was this—"A report has come in from the destroyer round by the left flank, that some wounded soldiers are lying unattended and without water below a trench manned by enemy who persist in firing on the Red-Cross."

The problem—"How to get them off?"

The solution as given to me was simplicity itself. In a boat with a sick-berth steward and six bluejackets armed with rifles, I was to be towed round the corner, abreast this Turkish trench and the wretched wounded lying beneath it. At 1,000 yards range the picket boat's three-pounder was to open fire on the trench while my six braves pulled straight for the shore. Directly the boat took the ground out they were to jump, fling themselves on the shingle, half in and half out of water, and open a rapid fire on the trench above them, while I and the sick-berth steward were to go *in between*, dress the wounded and carry them down to the boat.

The order finally concluded in the typical naval manner—"Get back as soon as you can, as the Admiral wants the picket boat!"

I pointed out a few possible flaws in these dispositions—(a) A three-pounder in a picket boat's bows, in a choppy sea, could not make accurate shooting at a thousand yards; (b) that my six "braves", under these somewhat exciting conditions, would be much more likely to shoot me than any Turk behind a trench, in spite of my not being a large target, and would be certain to shoot the sick-berth steward who *was* a most excellent target; (c) that if they and the three-pounder managed to miss us both, the Turks could scarcely avoid hitting us and (d) that as the net result, the numbers of unattended wounded or killed would be increased, at any rate, by two.

I suggested as an alternative but less scientific scheme that without the martial pomp of three-pounder shells and six rifles, I should pull in with a red-cross flag in the bows and see what would happen. This seemed a simpler—if less heroic—plan and had the advantage that if the Turks did fire on us we should, at any rate, have a legitimate reason for being cross with them.

Ultimately, my scheme was adopted and away I went, found the left flank, landed very comfortably amid a very cheery bathing party of Inniskillings among the rocks, and handed over a number of barricoes of drinking water. They hadn't heard of any wounded or any Turkish trench, but thought the battalion doctor—half way up the steep sides of the hill—might know something about them. He did; he had three whom I took off to a hospital ship without interference from the Turks except for one slight mistake—chiefly in elevation—they made while I climbed up that hill side, dodging from bush to bush and concealed—literally—in the sodden helmet and tunic which the lusty young giant who commanded the bathing party lent me to hide my own white uniform; he considered that that would prove too tempting even for a Turk.

Next day I had to stow nearly a thousand wounded aboard three small ships, the *Jonquil* and the fleet-sweepers *Aster* and *Newmarket.*

It was, I think, the saddest task I had to perform during the whole of the campaign, because my orders were to send back to the shore every stretcher possible, and every case in which it was feasible to do this had to be removed from his comparatively comfortable position to a blanket or waterproof sheet, stretched on the bare deck. In the first hurried rush of evacuating wounded most of the available stretchers had already gone away to Mudros, and the Army had few left to bring the hundreds of cases still waiting to be brought down to the sea shore.

On the following day—the 11th—any doubt we may have had as to the failure of the landing was finally dispelled by an urgent signal from shore for entrenching tools! Already the Turks had brought up more guns on that semicircle of hills which shut in the 9th Army Corps, and on the 12th they opened fire on the ships anchored inside the "net" and hit several of them, often. At first we in the *Swiftsure* were interested spectators, and were rather amused as ship after ship hurriedly shifted billet; but presently they switched on to us—in the middle of the dinner hour while the men were smoking in the battery—and killed and wounded twenty of them.

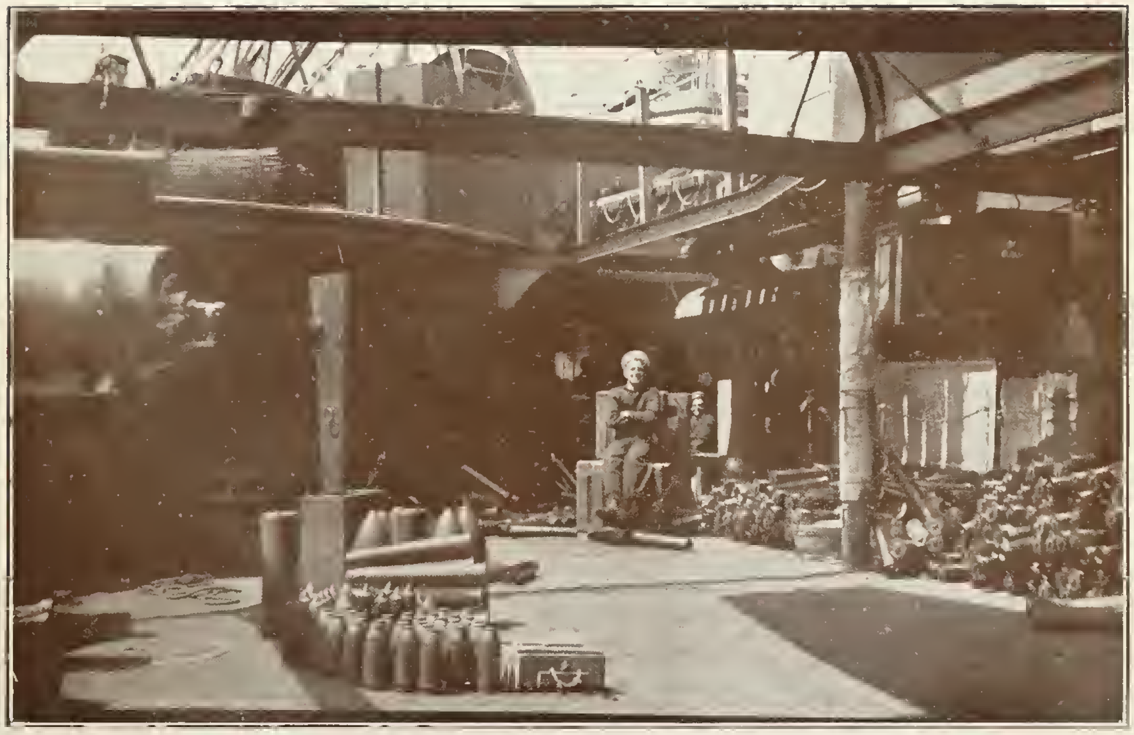
As an indication of how close together lay the ships inside the limited area protected by the "submarine net", a marine on the upper deck of the *Swiftsure* had an ear torn off one day by a fragment of a shell which burst on the *Venerable's* fo'c'sle.

A steamer *Bacchus*, employed as "distilling ship"—scarcity of water had been one of the causes of failure on the 6th August—lay for nearly four and a half months without a "spell off", constantly being fired at and very often hit with 4.1-inch. Her crew became nervous wrecks, but most of them "stuck it" to the end—all praise to them.

From now onward, and day after day, they fired on the battleships, cruisers, store-ships, "distilling" ships and all the motley throng of craft which lay in that crowded bay and made our lives extremely uncomfortable.

At first we used to go to "action quarters" and get under way; later on only the "retire" was sounded when shells came our way, and work on deck would be suspended while officers and men sheltered behind armour until the Turks wearied.

We may have invented the story that the Turk Artillery Commander—Anafarta Section—had a sweetheart installed in a rather conspicuous white house just outside Anafarta Kuchuk, but whether we did or not, we found that when he persisted in



Empty Cartridge Cases. H.M.S. Swiftsure.
After bombarding on April 25th, 1914.

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irritating us or other ships almost beyond gentlemanly forbearance, a dozen 14-pounder and perhaps a few 7.5-inch lyddite bursting near this house—"to annoy Fatima"—almost invariably made him hastily conclude his "strafe".

To attempt the impossible, the 29th Division was brought round from Helles and a general advance took place on the 21st August towards the two Anafartas, both from Suvla and the left flank at Anzac.

Hill No. 70—Scimitar Hill—was the objective of this day's fighting, and it would be a matter of extreme interest to know how the capture of this hill would have improved the local situation. However, it had to be taken and the 29th Division threw itself at its slopes and gullies under a murderous fire from batteries of all sorts mounted on the completely dominating, re-entrant enemy position.

The *Venerable*, *Swiftsure*, *Talbot* and *Euryalus*—moored head and stern, in that order—with their port broadsides bearing, opened a heavy fire on this hill at 1 p.m. and no doubt kept down machine-gun and rifle fire. The army batteries chipped in, and the Turks shelled the advancing troops from a number of different gun positions with high-explosive and shrapnel.

At 4.30 p.m. the men of this wonderful Division could be seen on the sky line of Scimitar Hill and then lost to a great extent the support not only of the heavy guns but also of their own batteries. They clung to it until 6 p.m. and then we saw the remnant fall back under very severe assaults and concentrated shell and machine-gun fire.

The ships opened again but were ordered, from shore, to cease.

I spent a good deal of that afternoon alongside the Corps Artillery Commander on our quarter deck and the difficulties of effectively co-ordinating fire from ships with the varying phases of battle on shore were very obvious.

Towards the evening the Scottish Horse—dismounted—advanced across the wide expanse of the "Salt Lake" in close formation, to make a last desperate effort to capture Scimitar Hill. Before they deployed the enemy high-explosive and shrapnel found them and—as if on parade—they opened out in a slow and dignified manner wonderful to see. Our Syrian interpreter, deeply moved, turned to me as we watched them and said, "I know the armies of Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, Turkey; nearly all my life I have seen them fighting but I have never seen men of such fine physique as these nor with such bravery under fire."

To the intense relief of all who looked on, this attack was called off, and by seven o'clock firing gradually died down although not before the Turks had spotted one of our batteries close to the shore, abreast the ship, and silenced it with high-explosive.

As dusk fell, with all the gloom of another day of futile carnage and hopeless gallantry, we saw smoke clouds rising from the scrub-covered plains over which the advance had taken place and watched stretcher parties and ambulances searching underneath them for wounded.

At night the flames of this burning scrub stretched for a mile or more, and those of our wounded who could not be rescued, perished where they lay.

So ended, in this sad fashion, the last definite attempt to open the road to Constantinople. Henceforth efforts were only concentrated on maintaining the ground already won, and the insensate project of forcing the Straits with all the old battleships—forts or no forts, guns or no guns, torpedoes or no torpedoes, mines or no mines—was abandoned.

Indeed, on the following day the question of the advisability of evacuating Suvla itself was debated at a conference held aboard the *Swiftsure*.

By this time the railway through Servia had fallen into enemy hands and more and more guns and more ammunition commenced to reach the Turks; we heard of preparations for still heavier ordnance, and wondered what would happen to the army—and to ourselves—when they did arrive.

At the end of August a commission of Russian Naval Officers from Sevastopol—including a constructor from the dockyard—visited the ship. They came to see for themselves the motor lighters in which troops had been taken ashore, and how the cruisers of the *Edgar* class and the monitors were "blistered" for protection against torpedoes. A great Russian landing to the east of Constantinople was even then still talked about and this fact is interesting to recall in view of subsequent events.

On one Sunday morning at 7 a.m., during this month, the ships bell tolled for Holy Communion in one casemate while the 7.5-inch gun, in the opposite one, fired at a Turkish gun emplacement, ceased during the actual Service and carried on again immediately afterwards.

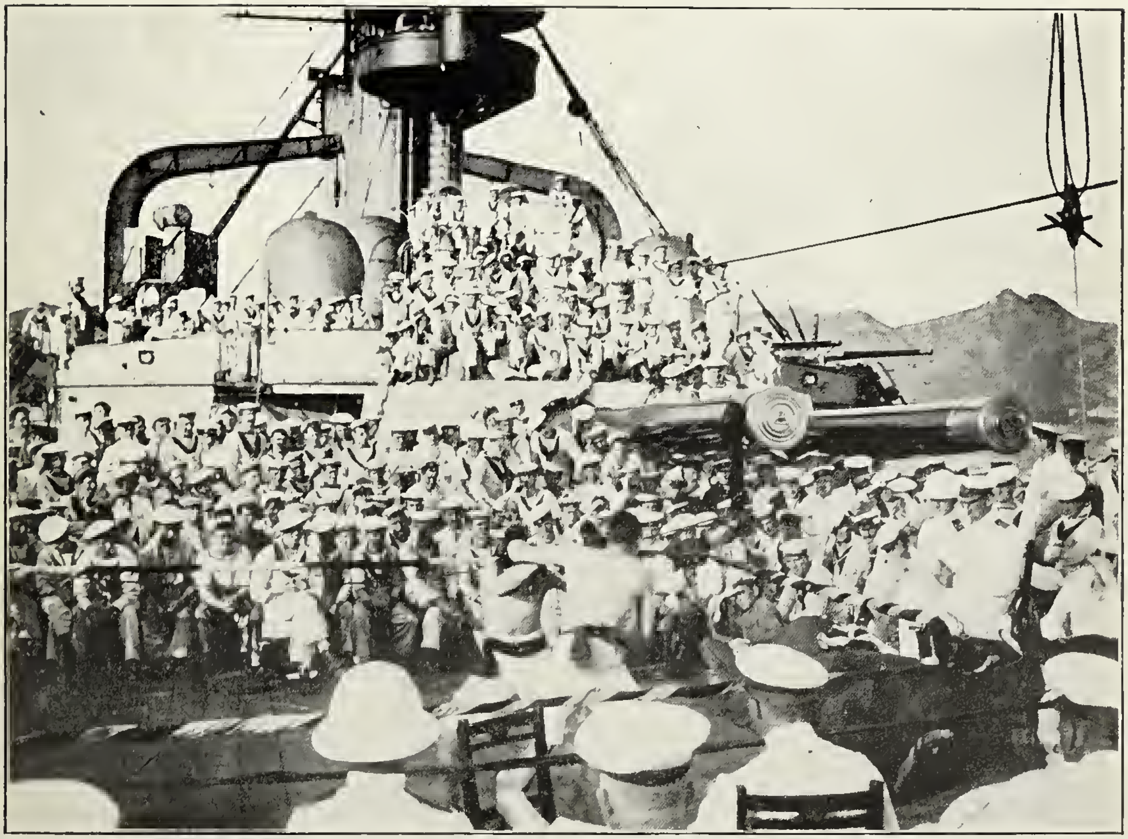
Even before September flies swarmed horribly on shore, and came off to the ships in the boats constantly passing to and fro. The flies I remembered in the old South African War may have been bigger but were not more numerous, and as a result of these infecting food, dysenteric diarrhœa—actual dysentery, later on—became rife. On board the *Swiftsure* we had some fifty or sixty men and officers continually working in these boats and very few of them or of the actual "beach" parties escaped; very many officers and men who never left the ship also suffered; the disease literally decimated the army.

The crews of these harbour boats were a source of anxiety to me—especially the midshipmen in charge of them. These lived on board the *Swiftsure* and worked twenty-four hours "on" and twenty-four hours "off" duty. On their duty days they were constantly under fire, expecially when close inshore or alongside the various landing jetties. I never saw any instance of one of them showing signs of paying too much respect to these shells but they were—nearly all of them—too young to stand the continual strain; they became nervously excitable, had difficulty in sleeping during their days off duty and many of them had to be invalided. In my opinion youths of this age are unfitted for employment for long periods under conditions of severe strain; their fund of nervous energy is equal to the demands of temporary stress—however severe—but is not sufficiently stable to re-adjust itself and recuperate when stressed unduly for long periods.

By October the Suvla sector, as had the other sectors, definitely settled down to a state of stalemate; troops were being despatched to Salonika; the *Swiftsure* became S.N.O. ship at Kephalo—after the Rear-Admiral had been wounded and hauled down his flag—and preparations for the winter were commenced.

General Monro now superseded the former Commander-in-Chief.

For a week in November S.W. gales strewed the beaches on the Peninsula with wreckage—motor lighters—lighters—tugs and steamboats, and then a blizzard swept down from the N.E. and caused the cruellest sufferings to Turks and British alike. On the night of the 28th, when the blizzard was at its worst, the floods of icy water washed away the parapets of many enemy trenches, washing dead Turks, drowned mules and débris into our trenches



Boxing Tournament. H.M.S. Swiftsure.
Sweep after "Mœwe." Cape Verde Islands.

Face page 268

below them, and when the pitiless dawn broke our men, standing in many places hip deep in icy mud and water, saw the still more wretched Turks, beyond and above them, huddled together in the open and had not the heart to shoot them, even had their fingers not been too stiff to pull their triggers.

At Kephalo—entirely exposed to this N.E. gale—a breakwater, formed of old merchant steamers and "dummy" battleships—was practically swept away, and I have never seen such a jumble of wreckage as accumulated at the top of that little harbour.

Lord Kitchener had come and gone, and we soon knew that Suvla and Anzac were to be evacuated. The *Swiftsure* herself took no part in this feat but was almost denuded of officers and men to man steamboats and work on shore.*

Luck, good fortune, call it what you will, which hitherto had consistently failed us, now at last smiled. The night of the evacuation could not have been more still, the sea calmer; and on the morning of the 19th December, when every man had been taken off, a S.W. wind blew hard on shore as if fortune wished to prove what she could have done had she not now thrown in her lot with us.

Then Helles had to be evacuated—a still more difficult task because naturally the Turks anticipated it—but on the afternoon of 8th January, 1916—six hours before the evacuation had to commence—Fortune sent a S.W. breeze and a falling barometer, with a sea just sufficient to convince the Turk that evacuation that night could not be attempted, but not sufficient actually to prevent it.

We waited anxiously at Mudros, listening to the rising wind as the night drew on, and fleet-sweepers, crowded with light-hearted infantry, came alongside, one after the other; at 9 a.m. of the 9th, the General Signal, "Helles evacuated successfully", caused intense relief.

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*Two of our lieutenants, Keate and Carnduff, distinguished themselves especially. They lost their lives in very tragic circumstances after the War ; and as they were men of outstanding character and with very high ideals, the loss to the Service was great.

These two evacuations and the brilliant organisations and magnificent discipline and courage which enabled them to be carried out with such complete success, atoned somewhat for the disastrous months which had passed and wiped away to a considerable extent the memory of their failure.

Transports and storeships, battleships, cruisers and auxiliaries gradually melted away from Mudros; camps and depôts ashore began to pack up, and the nightmare of the Dardanelles gave place to hopeful expectations that the vast number of troops and ships and the accumulation of stores could now be used more effectively elsewhere.

On the 18th January, 1916, the last active operations which I witnessed took place off Dedeagatch. *Swiftsure* (Flag), *Endymion*, *Havelock* and *Earl of Peterborough*, monitors, *Ark Royal*, aeroplane ship, several destroyers and many trawlers and drifters set out at 10 p.m. the night before—a perfect moonlight night—and as the sun rose next morning it glittered on the snow-clad slopes of Samothrace. The coastline of that island lay hidden by eddying wisps of haze and the peak looked like some fairy mountain, suspended, magically, in a cloudless sky, fit throne for the Olympian Gods—one of the most beautiful sights I can remember.

But we had not been sent out to marvel at the sunrise; stern work lay before us. The Frenchman *Bruix* and the Italian *Piedmonte* came to make an international affair of this day's work and soon the grim squadron lay in front of Dedeagatch. The *Havelock* with her 14-inch fired over the hills at an important railway bridge while an aeroplane from the *Ark Royal* spotted for her; the *Swiftsure* opened fire on three disused railway trucks on a siding well to the west of the town. For two hours and a half those wagons endured torture; we blew them off their rails; we blew them back again; in two hours they lay still, hardly worth the trouble of repair.

The Bulgarians did not reply, nor did we see anything with which they could have done so; but in spite of their ominous indifference, the *Bruix* pushed inshore and destroyed an outlying police-barracks which the *Theseus* had already rendered uninhabitable some weeks ago, and the *Piedmonte* attacked, single-handed, a British-owned tobacco-factory which the *Theseus* had already gutted on that same day.

The *Havelock* having reported the bridge much damaged, we all steamed along the coast to watch the *Endymion* land a party to blow up another small causeway-bridge, and then we went home again to Mudros.

At the height of the action, when the attitude of those railway trucks was almost menacing—and certainly disrespectful—the Young Doctor and I, down in our "dressing station" played two rubbers of bridge against the First Lieutenant and the Chaplain. We won both, and as our opponents were two of the best known card-sharpers in the ward-room we considered that the day had not been without its glorious moments.

There was nothing now to trouble about except the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, reported by our aeroplanes to be lying just above the "Narrows". The *Swiftsure* and *Russell* anchored in Kephalo, took it in turns to be twenty-four hours on duty with steam at a few minutes' notice, and with the job of delaying the *Goeben* if she ventured into the Mediterranean, until the *Lord Nelson* and *Agamemnon* could come across from Mudros and destroy her. This was a "job" which could have only one possible ending; but as it was essential I do not believe that anyone on board the *Swiftsure* worried about that.

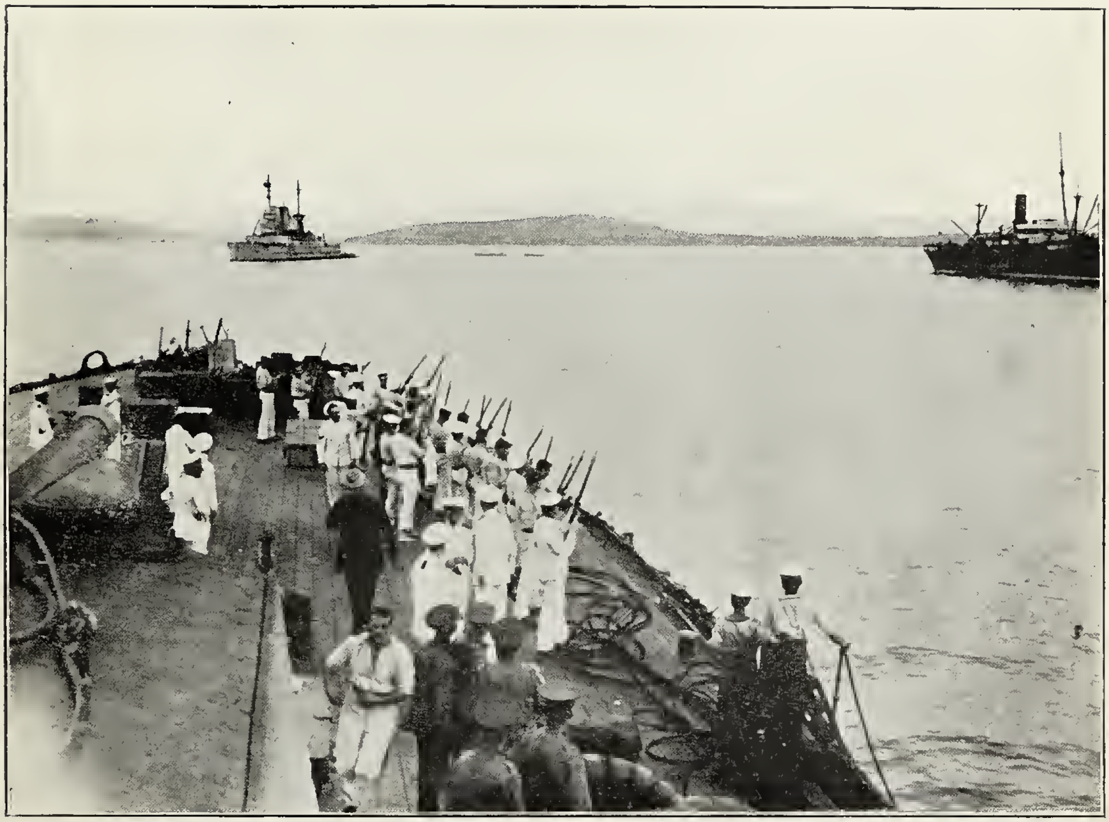
During this time I started writing *A Naval Venture*—my account of the Dardanelles campaign, written from a gun-room point of view—and finished it in three months.

On Monday, 7th February, we heard from the early morning aerial reconnaissance that the two German ships were raising steam; and at 1.15 we received the signal, "Proceed to sea". Everyone naturally thought that, at last, we were "for it" and went off to make preparations for the coming action. I went below to see all my "gear" laid out, and going round among the men, quietly preparing for battle, to examine the first-aid appliances in the main-deck casemates, I heard a buzz of voices, cheery voices, spreading along the mess deck; and a man put his head into the casemate in which I happened to be, and called out: "We're off to Gibraltar!"

The revulsion of feeling was great.

In an hour the *Swiftsure* had left harbour; at thirteen knots she boomed along past Helles, and the last we saw of that hateful Peninsula was the *Grafton* firing 6-inch lyddite at Ghurkka Bluff and a big shell-splash shooting up close alongside her—the last shot I saw fired during the war.

Helles now, twelve years later, conjures up visions of those transports' boats full of dead and wounded, pulling frantically out of the smoke haze after they had landed the Lancashire Fusiliers—of the terrific, rending, tearing crash of the first high-explosive shell to burst with a greenish-black smoke cloud over Helles, ten days later, followed by a curious hush of surprise, suspense and foreboding—of the dread of submarines and the final *sauve qui peut*, when they did appear.



Sulva Bay.
Hostile Aeroplane sighted.
Marine attachment preparing to fire on it.

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Gibraltar

Suvla conjures up that semicircle of hills from which guns, guns that we could not "knock out", dropped their shells where they pleased—a crowd of ships inside a submarine net, lying uneasily, day after day—the early mornings when one hurried to shave and dress before the morning "strafe" commenced—the prolonged "sighing" of the shells and the "flump" as they fell into the water—of the nights and the sweeping glare of Chanak light, reflected on the clouds above Anafarta Hills—and the abiding, ever-present conviction that we were doing work—or trying to do work—for which ships were not designed and therefore could not perform efficiently.

The recollection of the whole campaign still makes one marvel that England, in the time of her stress, could have conducted such an Expedition at such a distance from her shores; lurking uneasily in the mind is the suspicion that the vast expenditure of men, ships and munitions could have been employed more usefully elsewhere—and, lurking more uneasily still, that however brilliant the inception of the campaign, the manner of its conception and the prolonged labour which protracted its birth rendered failure inevitable.

Away we went, light-heartedly—through the Doro Channel—past Crete—zigzagging all day—out of one happy hunting ground of submarines into the next—zigzagged past Malta, Cape Bon, Pantelleria and Bizerta—so heavy a sea came out of the Gulf of Lyons that no submarine would think of attacking—then Gibraltar. Here we received orders to help "round up" the commerce destroyer *Moewe* (Pongo) down in the far South Altantic, and while the ship filled up with coal, a messmate and myself hired horses and rode out to the Cork woods in Spain, lay on the banks of a stream and watched some children and an old woman washing clothes; smoked our pipes, played with their dog, grazed our horses, listened to the gentle lip-lap of the running water, gloated on the restful green of the trees and the banks—the peacefulness of it all; ate an "omelletta" at the second Venta, and rode back to Gibraltar extraordinarily refreshed in mind, with the strain of the past ten months vanished.

We did not find the *Moewe*, but we crossed the "line" three times in ten days, and might have crossed it twenty times for all we cared—the submarine-free sea looked so pleasing.

At Cape Verde—our centre of operations—we found the *Highflyer* by herself, and her only doctor requiring his appendix removed immediately. We did this on board the *Swiftsure* at midnight, and sent him next morning, before we went to sea, to an armed-merchantman which had come in to rest.

Since commissioning the *Swiftsure* I had had to operate on four cases of appendicitis—the first in Colombo, the second in Muscat, the third in the Indian Ocean and the fourth at Cape Verde Islands—a rather curious geographical distribution!

In three months we were back again at Gibraltar, handed the old battleship to a fresh crew, and returned to England at the end of May, 1916.

CHAPTER XVIII

1916-1918

The Naval Disaster—Reflections—Naval Education—Appointed Naval Barracks—Conscientious Objectors—Appointed to Hospital Ship, " Soudan "—A " Vanguard " Survivor—Scapa Flow—The Last German Submarine to be Destroyed—Reflections on Life in the Grand Fleet—Surrender of the German High Sea Fleet—Pay Off " Soudan ".

THE "paid off" crew of the *Swiftsure* had scarcely commenced their well-earned leave when on the 31st May, 1916, the battle-cruisers *Queen Mary*, *Indefatigable* and *Invincible*, and the armoured-cruisers *Defence*, *Black Prince* and *Warrior* were sunk by the German High Sea Fleet without the enemy suffering equivalent loss.

Five German battle-cruisers, fighting six British battle-cruisers, more heavily armed, fighting in the old traditional manner, in line ahead, broadside to broadside, without interference from torpedo, destroyed the *Queen Mary* and the *Indefatigable* in forty minutes, and would, but for a miracle of gallantry, have destroyed the *Lion* in the same manner.

The news of this disaster stupefied the nation; people were stunned by the disparity of losses and wondered, dumbly, how these could have occurred.

Not until Lord Jellicoe published *The Grand Fleet* did they learn that "The System"—Diplomatic, Political, Financial, Administrative and Technical—had provided a Fleet deficient in many essential requirements and defective in many vital details, both of offence and defence, to wage war against the German Fleet.

This book, this "Rasplata" of the British Navy, but, thank God, with a different ending, due to the indomitable courage, resolution and fierce patriotism of the Fleet, gives rise to the most perturbing thought that there must be something radically wrong with the whole complicated, responsibility-shifting "System" which could so hazard the safety of the Empire.

On one point, at least, I have long been convinced—that the progress of the Navy, its power of assimilating and applying the advances of science to the needs and strategic problems of sea-warfare, has been handicapped by the initial training of its executive officers.

When scarcely more than children they pass through the same school—a school steeped in naval tradition—and their brains are there moulded at the period of their greatest plasticity to one uniform pattern. When they leave it they cling, like other schoolboys, to the traditions of their school and carry with them its impress, but unlike other schoolboys entering other professions, do not then meet boys from other schools with brains differently impressed and filled with other school traditions.

For the next three years—the most important educational years of life—they live together in little detached gun-room groups, bound together still more closely by their old school traditions and receiving rudimentary instruction in technical matters from people trained in exactly the same school. These years do not exact any mental strain except that of memorising and of mechanical adaptation; they are not years in which their brains are taught to reason. At a period of mental development, when the imaginative, creative and critical faculties and the co-ordination, correlation and interweaving of these faculties should be stressed, their growth is starved.

I have lived for very many years afloat with these youngsters, and have not the least doubt that this period, which should be one of the development of their higher mental powers is, in this respect, almost entirely wasted.

In other professions students from seventeen to twenty-one are mentally combative; they are trained and train themselves to think scientifically, to criticise each other's opinions, to criticise the opinions of their individual professors, to argue scientifically. Midshipmen have only one source of professional instruction—their various "manuals"; they come in professional contact with no one whose knowledge is derived from any other source than these same "manuals", so that there is no scope for criticism, for argument; there is, in fact, no scope for higher mental development.

These faculties do not develop spontaneously from within; the higher mental processes exist only as a potentiality—differing with the individual—and this potentiality is only roused into being by stimulation from without—by the clash and friction of differing opinions, differing intellects viewing the same subject from differing aspects. Where all have been taught alike, brought up alike, saturated with the same teaching and manner of thought, there can be no growth of this dormant mental power to its full development.

These years of paramount mental importance are, therefore, in my opinion, fallow years for the average naval executive officer, and this lost opportunity he seldom is able to regain in after life.

He inevitably tends to conform to a common universal mental type and his lack of power of critical analysis—of pure reasoning—the expression of the highest of the mental faculties, is often startling in a man so enthusiastic in his profession and of so genuine and transparent a character.

From these youngsters the brains of the Navy have to be evolved.

They are absorbed in the hum-drum, semi-mechanical routine of their craft; advancement to higher ranks follows not as the result of higher individual intelligence but as the result of seniority and assiduity, until at last they find themselves in a sphere where all the highest powers of intelligence—the development of which their training has denied them—are now required, and they have to acquire them if they can—how they can.

Genius cannot be denied; it will always emerge whatever its surroundings; but as genius is generally associated with peculiarities of temperament and disposition, it is much more likely to be looked upon merely as eccentricity and—if the possessor is an executive officer—as a somewhat irritating divergence from type which handicaps rather than favours his career in the Service.

One need only recall the Beresford-Fisher controversy of days gone by, to exemplify the animosity caused by a naval executive officer who differed from type, who tried to struggle clear of the old habits of thought and throw off the shackles of naval tradition.

I would myself, in those days, have stuck a knife into Lord Fisher's gizzard with great complacency—or into the gizzard of anyone who dared to uphold him—but the War had not then tested the efficiency of the educational system.

Since the War began, the Admiralty has commenced the direct entry of Public School boys, so perhaps the Old System is already doomed.

I have met many of these Public School entries, and they have impressed me with their individuality. They do not conform to one common mental type, and I am certain that it is now too late to mould their vigorous young brains to the same pattern, before they take their place in the Fleet—which will be all for the good of the Service.

If I may venture a suggestion, I should like to see all Acting sub-Lieutenants distributed throughout the country in Universities. They should pursue a twelve month's course in some applied science or in the 'Humanities'—(preferably of their own choice)—and their promotion should depend upon passing an examination in their particular subject at the end of this period.

So that they shall not form little naval coteries and thus shut themselves off from the local influences surrounding them, not more than three should be sent to any one centre.

To put it vulgarly, their brains should have a thorough "spring-cleaning" and a thorough "blow through".

. . . . .

I now became P.M.O. of the Portsmouth Naval Barracks, and for fifteen months watched the intensive training of men of the mercantile marine, fishermen and civilians, to fill the wastage of the Fleet and to provide crews for the new ships as they completed, the enormous number of auxiliary vessels commissioned and guns-crews for defensively-armed merchantmen.

More than 15,000 men were then borne on the books of *Victory II*, and those who could not be accommodated in the Barracks, lived in obsolete "overflow" ships moored in the harbour or alongside the dockyard.

As we had to look after all these men, examine them when they joined, examine them when they left and treat them while they were there, the duties of the permanent medical Staff were very arduous. Generally one of them, frequently two, and often three had to be sent away, at the same time, on steam-trials, with the result that the doctors, lent to the Barracks for a temporary "rest" after two years at sea, had anything but a quiet time.

A severe epidemic of cerebro-spinal meningitis in the winter of 1916–17 added much to the work; in the severe cases the onset was so sudden and catastropic—men, apparently healthy, dropping unconscious and dying within a few hours—that its dangers were obvious to everyone and gave rise to much uneasiness. Owing to the difficulty of eradicating infection among men who had associated closely with cases which occurred, and the danger of such men spreading the disease in the Fleet, the movements of "drafts" were very seriously hampered for some months. Fortunately, with the arrival of Spring, the epidemic gradually died down.

On the night of September 25th, 1916, shortly after midnight, a Zeppelin passed over Portsmouth from the direction of the Isle of Wight. It is not obvious why her commander, Mathy—the most daring of Zeppelin Commanders—came so far, yet dropped no bombs.

The real danger, however, lay in the Naval Barrack's Parade Ground where a hundred or more rifles and a maxim opened fire, presumably at it. Fortunately no one was hit; for which we gave thanks.

During my leave in the summer of 1917, I went down to Dartmoor to rest away from the atmosphere of war, and spent one day at Princetown. In the train with me came a soldier on leave from France, carrying all his equipment, with the grime of the trenches on him and the finely-drawn, peculiar "facies" of those who have been living "cheek by jowl" with Death. As we got out on the platform a large number of "conscientious" objectors (then incarcerated at Dartmoor Prison) swarmed outside the station railings and booed and hissed this man. They gathered round him, threateningly, howling gibes and taunts, until a lady, standing up in the station wagonette, told them—with unexpected powers of biting invective—exactly what she thought of them. They then slunk off like the canaille they were.

One can make allowances for genuinely conscientious objectors; they would have kept their opinions to themselves on such an occasion; but this spume of the Nation, unworthy to die with arms in their hands, should have been sent to the trenches to fetch and carry for the men who fought for them—and left there.

In August, 1917, I was appointed P.M.O. of the Hospital Ship *Soudan* and remained in her until after the Armistice. She had been hired from the "P and O" Company, at the outbreak of war, fitted as a hospital ship and still retained her "P and O" officers and crew.

Her master, Captain Hamilton Call, and myself worked together for twenty months, most cordially, without any of that friction which is so liable to be caused by the overlapping of both responsibility and authority in the respective spheres of the P.M.O. of the Hospital and the Master of the Ship.

The *Soudan* was attached to the Grand Fleet, but never accompanied it to sea; she lay for alternate three months, either at Scapa Flow or in the River

Forth—generally above the bridge—with somewhat frequent intervals at Leith, for refitting and revictualling; and when one watched the provisions coming on board there in bulk, it was hard to realise the general food shortage throughout the country.

Besides myself, there was only one regular Naval Doctor on the medical staff, the remainder having joined for the War; three Naval Nursing Sisters and a nucleus of Naval Sick Berth Petty Officers, reinforced by some fifty or sixty cotton operatives and coal miners from Lancashire and Yorkshire (St. John Ambulance Corps and R.N. Sick Berth Reserve) completed the nursing staff.

We had plenty to do in our wards and operating theatre, but very few war injuries came our way. A few survivors from ships sunk by mine, torpedo or collision, were brought to us from time to time, injured or suffering from shock and the effects of exposure and immersion; these men we clothed from our Red-Cross stores until they could be provided with fresh uniforms.

Two men brought to us from a ship sunk by bumping a mine had been blown overboard, clean through two decks—one steel and the other wood; yet neither had a scratch or even a bruise on him!

Their experience reminds me of the stoker—one of the three survivors on board the *Vanguard*, at the time she blew up. At the Court of Inquiry, when asked at what time he thought the explosion occurred, he gave the time to the minute, and was so certain about it that the Court wanted to know why. He replied that all he knew about it was that when asleep in his hammock, in the half-deck, he woke with a hot glare round him, felt himself and his hammock going up through the hatchway and noticed the time by the glare on the half-deck clock.

"It was a coming up along of me, sir," he explained, noticing that the Court still looked unconvinced.

Admiral Prendergast, of Scapa Depôt, and the *Cyclops*, took a very paternal interest in the little squadrons of hospital ships, *Soudan*, *Garth Castle*, *Berbice*, *China*, *Agadir*, *Magic* and *Classic*; Surgeon Rear-Admiral Sir Humphrey Rolleston used to make periodic professional visits, and Admirals frequently came on board to walk round the wards, as did the Roman Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian and Wesleyan chaplains stationed there—a little, cheerful group of earnest men who always worked in company. In fact, their *team* work did more to emphasise the reality of religion than any single-handed individual efforts could have achieved.

Just before the Armistice, a German submarine Commander made a last desperate attempt to pass through the "gate" in the submarine nets and sink a ship before he and his crew died or surrendered. Shortly after dark one of the "listening" stations reported that she could hear a German submarine approaching (the noise of German motors could be distinguished from that of English) so all movements of steam-craft in the harbour were promptly stopped to avoid sound interference. By cross-bearings from the other "listening" station, they "plotted" his track on the chart of the electrically-fired mine-field which she must pass through in her attempt. Presently the "listening" stations heard her stop her engines and blow her tanks; doubtless she came to the surface to have a last look round and take her bearings. Then she submerged and pushed very slowly in towards the gate.

Down in the mine-field observation station, the little spot of light, on the chart which marked her track, travelled very, very slowly towards the mines, and the observation officer, following it tensely, waited until it had passed through the first "gate," knew that the submarine had slewed round to make for the second "gate"—and pressed his firing key!

Next morning divers found her lying on the bottom with an enormous gap in her side—the last submarine, I believe, to be destroyed in the War. It was a gallant—a despairingly gallant feat.

The life on board those ships of the Grand Fleet I did not share; I lived in comfort and luxury on board a Hospital Ship, but I could grasp the strain that ever gripped the brains of the leaders of that Fleet, who had had problems to solve and still had to try and solve problems of vital need, problems many of which are, even now, nine years later, scarcely nearer a solution.

I watched mine-sweeping flotillas going out to their hazardous task; I saw them come back; a destroyer might bring alongside three—or four—or five survivors if one of them had struck a mine; and I saw cruiser squadrons and destroyers—long lines of destroyers—grey shadows—slipping out to sea and coming back—in fine weather and in hideous weather; and I felt ashamed of the comfort and security in which I lived.

As a day closed, the harbour might be full of ships; at dawn it might be empty. Some signal had come through from the Admiralty during the night, and they had all silently steamed out to face the dangers of minefields and submarines—and the hazards of the dark nights of war-cruising.

In one day, two days, three days—in the middle of the night or at dawn, or in fog, one would hear the rattle of the cables, look out and there, in ordered lines, The Grand Fleet had come back—in majestic, disciplined array.

I could not help feeling the helplessness of the Battle Squadrons, dimly wondering among themselves if the era of sea mastodons was drawing to a close and if sea warfare, as they had expected it, did now have no place for them.

I do not think that the general public realised fully that the life on board ships of the Grand Fleet —on board the Battle Fleet especially—during those drawn out years of war, gradually became one of terrible, soul-destroying monotony. Most of the capital ships carried crews far beyond their peace complements, with the result that their lower-decks —always uncomfortable—were now doubly so. Very large numbers of the men had only been entered since the war began, and not having been inured by early training to lower-deck life, longed at times with intense desire to escape, even for a few moments, from the inevitable crowding and jostling—elbow to elbow—shoulder to shoulder—on those over-crowded mess-decks. Privacy and quiet were impossible; they could not read a letter without being jostled, could not write one except in a babel of voices and a dozen mess-mates pushing past them in the narrow spaces between the long mess-stools. Not for one moment, anywhere, or at any time, could they be alone, day after day as the months crawled hideously along.

Sleep gave them the only refuge, sleep in those crowded mess-decks and spaces, hammock to hammock, in the often fetid air from a thousand sleepers!

The physical danger to which they were exposed was not comparable to that of those who fought in the trenches; but the dreary waiting, the apparent inaction, the "do nothing"—the reason of which many of them could not understand—made life for these one long drawn-out weary monotony.

They longed with an intense longing to get through the business with the enemy fleet and "have it out"—one way or another—and settle the matter—once and for all.

Every effort was made to relieve this monotony, to give the men some interest, exercise and mental stimulus, by route-marches, cross-country running and football out of the ships, and by lectures, cinematographs, concerts and by progressive, competitive team-exercises on board them. An old friend of mine, Commander Coote, who organised this last monotony-exorcising scheme and stayed on board the *Soudan* with me, once or twice, was extraordinarily enthusiastic about its merits, but he had a somewhat hopeless job, and I could never be convinced that his schemes would meet with much success.

I do however know—and I am writing as a rank "outsider" who does not attempt to claim the Grand Fleet Companionship—that the psychological effect of the four (and sometimes five) American battleships which eventually joined the Grand Fleet had the most outstanding beneficial and stimulating effect on the morale of the men of that Fleet. The sight of those lattice masts, of the Stars and Stripes and of the quaintly conspicuous American steamboats, darting about the harbour—with all that they implied—gave a comforting, hopeful feeling to the most homesick and war weary.

They gave a new turn to conversation and debate on the lower-decks, where most of the ordinary mess-deck topics had long since died a weary death, stifled by constant reiteration. There was now always some deviation from Navy custom and method, some difference in uniform or materiel to start a discussion, arouse animation and help to pass the time; so that, merely by their presence, these battleships—*New York*, *Florida*, *Arkansas*, *Texas* and *Wyoming*—earned the privilege of taking part in that wonderful cortége which escorted the surrendered German High Sea Fleet to its grave in Scapa Flow.

In my opinion this surrender of the German Fleet came too late, was a too long deferred anti-climax, to arouse the elation that might have been expected. The result had not been obtained as the Fleet had desired; there was not the proud satisfaction that would have followed a great sea victory, and there existed a quaint sympathy with their enemy in his debasement.

We in the *Soudan* watched the surrendered destroyers come in, dirty and dishevelled, very unimposing in appearance; twenty-four hours later the battle-cruisers arrived under escort of our battle-cruiser squadron, steaming into harbour in a smother of black smoke against a deep red sunrise; and early next morning the German battleships and light cruisers arrived in charge of our battle-squadrons.

The German naval menace, which had perturbed the peace of Europe for nearly sixteen years, was a thing of the past.

Discipline on board these ships scarcely existed at this time; the spirits of the officers we saw and met seemed to be broken—as well it might; men with white bands round their sleeves—members of the lower-deck committees—appeared to exercise most of the authority, and would have exercised all had not our Commander-in-Chief refused to recognise their existence and dealt only with the proper officers. These white-banded mutineers depended on us for their food and water, so they had no alternative but to behave themselves. Subsequently discipline reasserted itself and these committees disappeared.

The *Soudan* had still much work to do; the vast war organisation of the Fleet could not be broken up in a moment, and it was not until March, 1919, that she finally went to Cardiff to "pay off" and re-condition, for her old job of "trooping" to India.

I said good-bye to her with much regret.

CHAPTER XIX

1919-1926

Royal Naval Hospital, Cape of Good Hope—The "Cap Polonio"—The "Springboks"—The Boer Generals and the Bootlaces—My First Bet—A Bush Fire—The Lonely Lobster—My Guinea-pig Hutch—Promoted—Home Round the East Coast—Mozambique—Three Portuguese Deserters—My One Shark Story—R. N. Hospital, Plymouth—Reach the Age of Retirement—Reflections.

SHORTLY after the War terminated I was appointed in charge of the Naval Hospital at the Cape of Good Hope. In June, 1919, my wife and I sailed from Plymouth in the *Cap Polonio*, a surrendered German liner, now making her maiden voyage.

She was a sister ship of the *Cap Trafalgar*, the armed liner which had capsized early in the war, in a duel with the merchantman *Carmania*; and as the British ship only carried 4.7-inch guns the fact of the *Cap Trafalgar* capsizing, caused many people to question the stability of the *Cap Polonio*. At least one weekly journal had prophesied that she would never reach her destination, so that some of the repatriated South African soldiers and their families, travelling in her, viewed the prospect with anything but equanimity.

One wife, with four little children, lived in a cabin some four decks "down" and worried greatly how she would be able to find her way to her boat if the ship "turned turtle during the night." She begged my advice, and I promised to fetch her directly the catastrophe occurred and stow them away comfortably in their boat. I did not tell the harassed mother that it would first be necessary to bore a hole through the bottom of the ship and sit on her keel—if she had one—until their proper boat "bobbed" up!

Because of this suspicion a good many of the passengers kept their eyes on the huge swimming bath, on the boat deck, and when we reached the tropics and the Skipper still refused to have it filled, their worse fears were confirmed.

The full drawings of the ship had not been handed over with her, and there was more than a suspicion that the Germans had tampered with her machinery, boilers and fresh and salt water systems.

We understood that the German Emperor had intended to make a triumphant world cruise in her after the War, had not his arrangement miscarried somewhat; and I certainly have never seen a ship fitted so luxuriously. My wife and I occupied a most sumptuously fitted and decorated suite of rooms and our own alluring bath-room would alone have made the voyage memorable had any of the numerous "gadgets" produced anything more exciting than cold sea water—and not even that sometimes.

The voyage turned out to be a most uncomfortable experience, the stewards giving much trouble and the machinery giving more; salt water getting in to the fresh-water tanks and refrigerators constantly going wrong. By the time we reached the Cape the little meat we had became tainted, and but for a few bottles of champagne, there was nothing to drink except a limited quantity of brackish water, so limited that even that indispensable meal at sea—afternoon tea—had to be forbidden. In fact, so many things were forbidden that we became thoroughly Germanised with "verboten" notices.

The returning troops behaved remarkably well under these somewhat exasperating conditions. Some little while afterwards I heard their military value summed up by a deserter from the Royal Navy who surrendered at Simon's Town for punishment. He had joined the first contingent of Australians and fought with them, but eventually served among the South Africans for the last year of the war. He now gave his opinion very tersely, "Them 'Springboks' fight as hard as them——Australians but they——well don't talk so much about it!"

He could scarcely pay them a greater compliment.

At the end of July, 1919, I took charge of Simon's Town Naval Hospital. Perched nearly four hundred feet above sea level and nestling half way up the tree-clad slopes of Simonsberg, it commands the most enchanting views of False Bay and the Drakensbergs beyond. It escapes the dust-blown street of Simon's Town and is just sufficiently isolated from and above the Dockyard, and the rest of the Naval Establishments, to give that sense of independence which makes the post of P.M.O. here so pleasant.

Behind and above the Hospital, Simonsberg rears its bold outlines and an elevated, rugged plateau, covered most of the year with a wonderful multitude of flowering plants, stretches away to the South Atlantic.

The old naval hospital down in the dusty little town—where I worked in the early days of the Boer War—had now become the Dockyard Police Barracks, and the East Dockyard with its dry docks, had been built over the little bays where I then used to bathe. The old Dockyard still retained its "sailing-ship days" atmosphere, and always when

I went to it, conjured up the figure of Lord Roberts on that day, twenty years ago and more, when he came to see the two "4.7's" on their carriages, fired out to sea, and inspect those of us who took them up country.

At the first opening of the Union Parliament after the War, I heard General Smuts deliver his oration on General Louis Botha who had died at the end of August, 1919; and though he spoke in Dutch, realised his skill as an orator and the genuine emotion under which he spoke and his audience listened. Looking round the combined Assembly that day, the racial divergence of physical types seemed most striking, and I could not but understand the difficulty of any policy being considered, or debated, except on racial lines.

On a later occasion I met at Government House, Cape Town, several of the Boer Generals who had fought against us in the old war days. By this time the South African Government had issued a Dutch medal for that war, and these men were now wearing the miniature of it, side by side with those of the medals they had won so valiantly in the Great War.

During the Boer War my father had heard that a great scarcity of bootlaces existed among the troops, so he collected a really enormous number of porpoise-hide laces and sent them out in packing cases. Boer Commandoes derailed the train in which they were sent up to Bloemfontein for distribution and captured all of them.

That evening I asked the first General I met, one who wore the Dutch miniature, "if he had stolen my father's bootlaces?" The conundrum naturally required further explanation, but he denied the charge. However, he thought he knew who had "bagged" them and fetched three more Generals, one after the other, bringing them along as the possible culprits, with "Here is the chap who stole the laces!"

They much regretted that they had not had that luck, but wanted the yarn—slightly embroidered—repeated to them and we had a thoroughly amusing time, in the middle of which up came the Governor-General to find out the cause of the hilarity and they laughingly protested that I had accused them all of stealing bootlaces!

That evening turned out to be much more amusing—for me, at any rate—than most ceremonial "at homes" or receptions.

Kenilworth races—every fortnight throughout a very long season—provided the opportunity of meeting many of the local residents in the Cape Peninsula. We soon knew the horses by sight, the jockeys, trainers and owners—most of them—but we never knew exactly which horse would win and I think that sometimes they did not know themselves. However, as each horse appeared—to the uninitiated—to be given his winning chance in turn in his own "class" it was only a matter of deciding when his turn had come—not quite so easy a matter as it sounds.

During these three years I saw two horses staked, on different days, at exactly the same place, and owing to the same lack of experience. Each was ridden by an apprentice, each was leading on the rails a furlong from home, and on each occasion the jockey, looking back, pulled his horse on to the rail which snapped and impaled the poor brute.

The comfort of the Totalisator made betting there simple and enjoyable. I do not know if many people dislike facing the usual "bookie" as much as I do. My very first bet, made at a local Hunt Meeting in Wales very many years ago, gave me a thorough dislike of them, which has saved me a good many pounds since.

I had gone there with a number of people on a coach, and one fair young thing, at whose shrine I then happened to be worshipping, felt so sure that a certain horse—*a five-to-one-on favourite*—would win that she commissioned me to lay out a whole shilling on him. Lacking greatly in wisdom, I approached the most respectable of the bookmakers and very diffidently made known my investment.

"D'you want five Jimmy O'Goblins?" he roared.

"Not quite!" I answered, a little flustered, "one shilling; it's . . . as a matter of fact, it's for a lady!"

He shouted to his clerk so loudly that I imagined that the whole county must hear him, "Put the little gen'l'man down a shilling, Garge; a shilling on the fav'rite—not fer 'imself—fer 'is Ameliar."

When the horse did come in, some fields ahead of the others, I returned one-and-tuppence-ha'penny to Diana, perched on top of the coach flushed with the success of her "plunge"; but with wisdom matured, did not venture near "Garge" or his raucous partner, and paid the vast sum out of my own pocket —it did not have many shillings in it in those days.

The south shore of False Bay is dotted with thriving little watering places and at one, Kalk Bay, on the hill side, just above where the station now stands, the first British red-coat to be killed in South Africa was shot by a Dutch soldier, in 1806, when a little force landed from a British Fleet, and marched to the capture of Cape Town and Cape Castle—for the second and last time.

Whales used to come into this bay, in the old days, in large numbers, but during our stay we only saw one. He found his way into the basin in the old dockyard, and too frightened by his surroundings to escape, huddled up against the sea wall, looking like a submarine without a conning tower. He was hunted and shot at with rifles until he did find his way out to sea again mortally wounded.

In the middle of the first dry season an unusually intensive bush fire, some miles wide, spread down the sides of Simonsberg and threatened to destroy the hospital and my house. Some three hundred men and most of the officers from the squadron came up to fight this fire; but by ten o'clock that night the flames were roaring past the house; burning branches, blown by a strong south-easter, fell on the roof and balconies, the house was filled with acrid smoke and a couple of fire-hoses added to the discomfort.

We had evacuated all the patients and valuable instruments down into the town, and friends dashing up in cars dismantled the house, taking away even the contents of the "store-cupboard" and, worse than that, one suit-case of night gear and clean uniform for the morrow, which I had tried to hide from them. Fortunately just as things looked their very worst a change of wind diverted the fire, and by 3 a.m., when we were left alone, as black as niggers, my wife and I searched for that suit case—but it was not!

In the middle of the excitement a young officer, who of course had no business to be there, fell into a pit and cut his external jugular vein which distracted my attention from the fire for some half hour or more.

Another of the young fire-fighters shortly afterwards married a lady equally gifted as himself with a lack of worldly wisdom, and set up an establishment in a doll's house down by the water's edge. Fate sent them a present of a fine live lobster; a live lobster they had never seen; they had not the least idea how to begin to make it red and dead, so they secured it by a chain to the leg of a table, shut up the doll's house and sallied forth to seek knowledge.

Meanwhile, an important Personage, coming to pay her first call, found no one to answer her knocking, but from inside came the sound of weird, uncanny noises, so fearing the worst, possible the tragic end of a short-lived romance, she looked cautiously through a window and saw that wretched lobster making circles round the table leg, straining at his chain, winding it up and then, reversing, slowly unwinding it again.

When the two young venturers returned, knowing the unhappy ordeal facing the lobster before he did become red, they wondered if his restlessness might not be due to the pangs of hunger or thirst; they tried him with a saucer of milk but he refused it and they felt so very sorry for him that they led him down to the edge of the sea by his chain, unfastened his collar and pushed him in!

During my time at Simon's Town very rapid changes took place in the composition of the Union Defence Forces. Practically all the British Officers employed on staff work returned to England, and many of those attached to various local corps were replaced by others born in South Africa, preference being given to those who could speak both English and Taal. As bi-linguists are, generally speaking, of Dutch extraction, the tendency was, therefore, to replace Englishmen by Dutchmen—a somewhat ominous policy of reaction.

Before the War the populace of the Union probably never gave a thought to the influence of sea-power on their country, although its whole history had been bound up with the sea and developed from it. But when the War came, the mere possibility that Von Spee's squadron might appear off the Cape, caused so much alarm that the previously planned expedition against German South West Africa—entailing a voyage of 750 miles—was delayed until after the

Falkland Island battle. Later on, early in 1917, six ships were sunk by German mines in the vicinity of the Cape.

These incidents, added to the knowledge diffused through South Africa by the many thousands who had travelled overseas to fight, awakened an interest in the sea and its influence on their country, which resulted in the nucleus of a future South African Naval Service being formed, with its head-quarters at Simon's Town. A surveying vessel and two trawlers, given by the Admiralty, arrived and commenced, under British instruction, to train crews for them and to give sea instruction to local Divisions of the R.N.V.R.

A training ship—the *General Botha*—partially supported by Union Government funds—also started to train boys for a sea career.

I watched these schemes developing slowly and falteringly, but they were both handicapped—as every other Public Service still is—by the curse of mutual racial suspicions.

In conjunction with Lieut.-Commander Charles Struben, of the R.N.V.R. (S.A.), I wrote at this time a small book on the influence of the sea on South Africa; but the public was not really sufficiently interested in the subject to make it pay for publication, let alone the time spent in writing it.

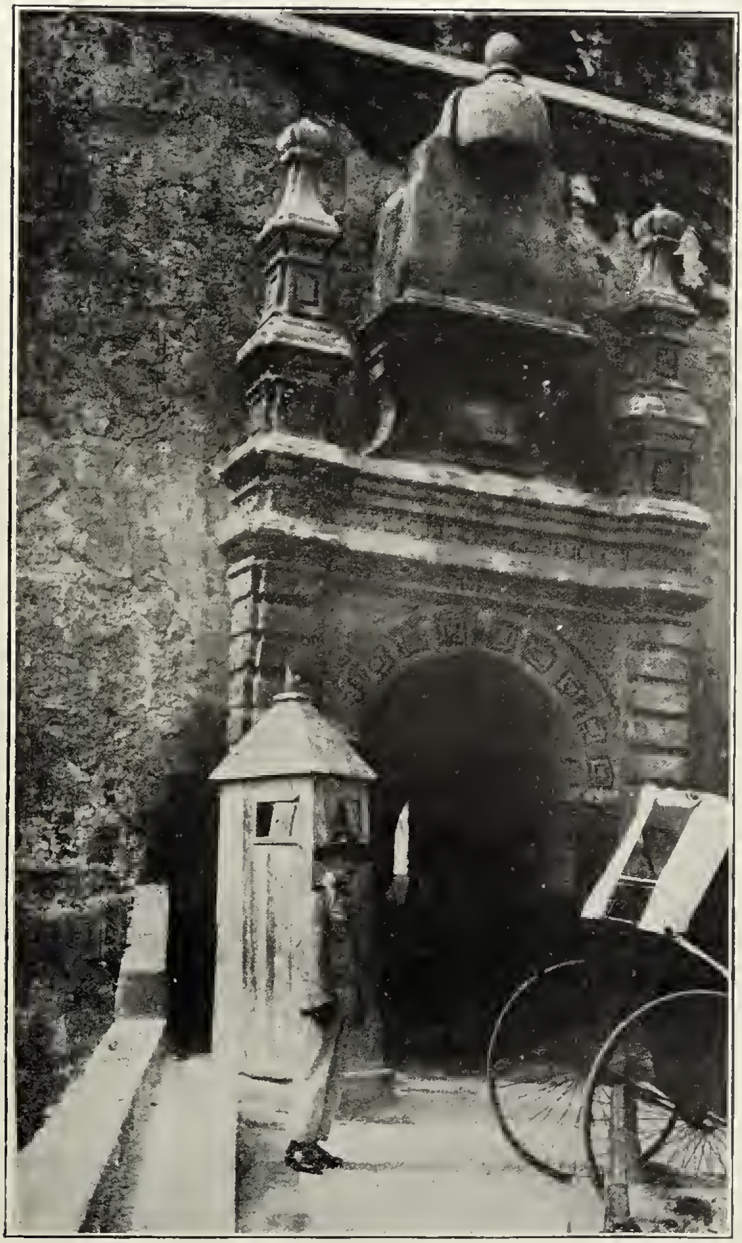
In March, 1922, the revolutionary rising in the gold mining districts caused much alarm, all available forces were rushed north and the Dutch "commando" system was tested successfully—but not without much bloodshed.

The little hospital of which I was in charge needed one thing to make it a model establishment—a garage for the P.M.O.'s motor car. It also needed a few guinea-pigs for special purposes and as these guinea-pigs would require a hutch I obtained permission to have one made for them. I drew the designs for this hutch and submitted them for approval to—eventually—the Commander-in-Chief, Sir William Goodenough. The dimensions certainly erred on the liberal side—twelve-feet wide, ten-feet high and twenty-feet long, with a concrete floor, in which was a deep pit, and with two wide doors at the entrance; but I explained that guinea-pigs were delicate little creatures requiring much air space, that in hot weather the pit could be filled with water and afford them the grateful comfort of a swim, and that the two swinging doors would allow the "hutch" to be cleaned easily—of especial hygienic importance.

Unfortunately, the impression had somehow got aboard that I wanted a garage and I had to admit that, looking at the plans from this point of view, it would be possible to squeeze a car in and that the bath for the guinea-pigs would, by a really strange coincidence, make an excellent inspection pit! Those plans were not approved, but I was offered the loan of a disused barrel from the dockyard! Poor little guinea-pigs!

For three years I remained here; years which, in their uneventful happenings and serenity of climate, passed only too quickly and happily among a constantly changing little colony of naval families, whose wives, not altogether content to regale each other with "teas" at the Naval Tennis Club, had begun to cast longing eyes at the very small Naval Club; but they had not managed to effect a lodgment there—not at any rate before I left for home.

We travelled home in the *Grantully Castle* by the very interesting East Coast-Suez Canal route, a voyage made still more entertaining by the receipt of a "wireless" telegram informing me that I had been promoted to "four stripes" and now could



Gate of Mozambique Fort.
Built of stone brought from Portugal.

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serve for nearly four more years before retiring on a much more adequate pension.

At Mozambique we anchored a-breast the walls of that grand old Portuguese Castle, built in 1510—of stones brought from Portugal itself—as a defence against the Arabs whose trade the Portuguese were destroying, and to afford them a safe victualling station before their fleets sailed across to India.

When the Dutch spread East, they twice sent fleets to capture this castle, and only after the second failure contented themselves with forming a victualling station of their own on the shores of Table Bay—the beginning of Cape Castle, of Cape Town and of a Dutch South Africa. Had they succeeded in capturing those dingy, weather-beaten walls, the whole history of the sub-continent would have been changed entirely.

During the second of these sieges, early in the seventeenth century, one of those quaint incidents occurred which could only happen in those rugged days of close fighting.

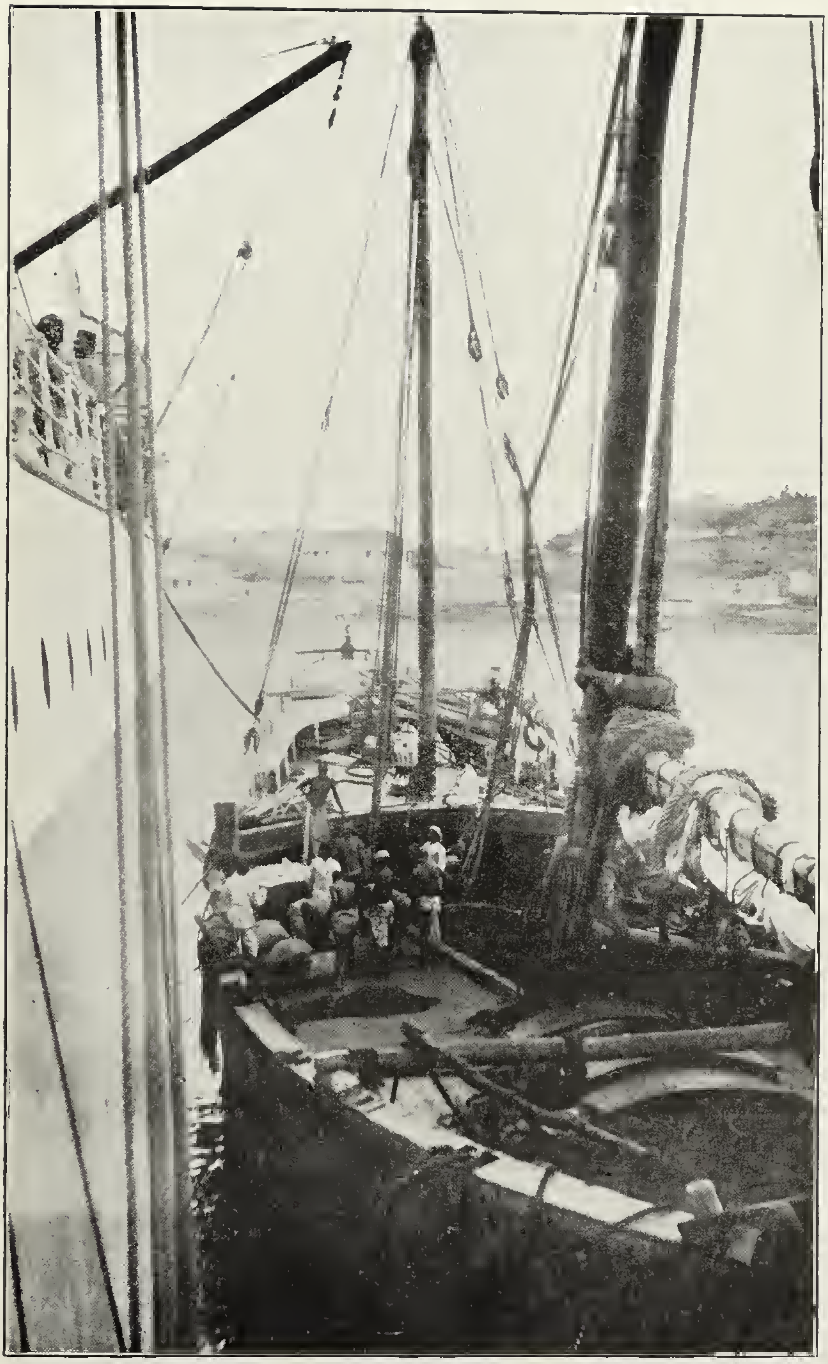
Three Portuguese deserted to the Dutch fleet and gave information of the desperate straits of the garrison. The Dutch Admiral asked the Portuguese Governor what he would like done with them and he replied, "hang them"; so at sunrise next morning they were strung up to the Dutchman's foreyard while all the garrison of the Castle, with banners, pikes and muskets, was drawn up on the walls to see the punishment carried out. One could picture the brave old warrior, abandoned by his country in that far-distant island, standing there among his climate-enfeebled soldiers, grimly watching the deserters swung into eternity. Afterwards he sent off to the Dutch Admiral a present of wine and fruit; and it is really rather pleasing to know that the Dutch were in even greater straits than he was and presently sailed away with mutual expressions of chivalrous appreciation.

This is the first of that chain of grand old Portuguese castles—Mozambique, Zanzibar, Mombasa, Muscat, Hormuz, Bombay, Goa and Colombo, which stand as monuments of history, of romance and of mighty adventure.

The south-west monsoon had set in steadily, and just as it has done from time immemorial, had brought hundreds of Arab dhows from India and the Persian Gulf! We met them trading at every port we called at, as far as Aden. They were probably of exactly the same design as those which carried part of Alexander the Great's mutinous army from India to Persia; and looking at them, one was carried back through thousands of years. Each did carry a modern binnacle-compass, but that appeared to be the only modern fitting—and the ancestors of these same fine Arab seamen, with their elementary compasses, had passed on even this invention to the West!

We called at Dar-es-Salaam, and saw there the aftermath of war—the disabled floating dock and the sunken *Tabora* and *Koenig*. One of the hotels, formerly the "Kaiser Hof", now rejoices in the name Hotel Versailles—which seemed its chief attraction. It was here that the Germans fired treacherously on the boats of H.M.S. *Goliath* and *Fox* from the banks on each side of the narrow entrance. The whole settlement is most beautifully planned and far surpasses, in this respect, any British place on the coast.

At Mombasa we were much amused by the taxis—old, worn-out motor cars which had been sold for next-to-nothing, after contributing so greatly to the success of the East African Campaign. Each native owner had an assistant whose duty it was to



Dhow, Port Amelia, South Africa.

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carry out minor repairs and readjustments on the way, jumping out, lashing up some part or other with string and jumping in again, until the next bit fell off or loosened. For all their battered, derelict appearance, the owners took full advantage of there being no official speed-limit and drove like the wind. A drive in one of them was an adventure in itself.

After rounding Cape "Guardafui" and before reaching Aden, we passed through a school of enormous sharks, lazily floating just beneath the surface of the calm sea. They scarcely troubled to get out of our way so that we had plenty of time to judge their size. They must have averaged well over twenty feet long and no one—passengers or crew—had ever seen such a sight before.

As a result, I felt obliged to "trot out" my one shark story, the incident occurring in those far away days when the *Ruby*, *Volage* and two other ships, whose names I forget, formed the Training Squadron and cruised every winter under sail, white-winged corvettes of beauty, down to the West Indies. On this particular occasion they expected, on reaching Havana in a few days' time, to find a mail waiting for them with the list of the New Year's Promotions; the First Lieutenant of the *Volage* had almost given up hope of finding his name in it.

One morning, two days out from Havana, the people in the *Volage* noticed the *Ruby*—a lee-line ship—haul a shark on board and presently she made a signal, "Captain and Officers to Commander Boyce. Congratulate you on promotion. We have just caught a shark with the *Times* of January first inside him."

The explanation is simple enough: the mail steamer had only passed a few hours before; someone had thrown overboard his unwanted *Times* and the following shark had swallowed it.

The voyage home occupied exactly two months from Cape Town to Tilbury and I can well recommend it to people who desire a long voyage with very many extraordinarily interesting ports of call at intervals of a few days.

On reaching England I was appointed in charge of the Surgical Division of Plymouth Hospital, and as I had five weeks' foreign-service leave due to me, thought it just as well to "rub up" my operative surgery.

In the three years and a half which followed, the Surgical Staff performed considerably more than two thousand operations, a large proportion of which were what are still termed "major" operations. This is an indication of the enormous advances which the Naval Medical Service and Naval Hospitals have made in the last thirty years. The equipment of the various departments of these hospitals—at Plymouth, Haslar, Chatham and Malta—is now as complete and elaborate as in all but the best endowed London Hospitals; and the Sea-Doctors who are in charge of them have "specialised" by hard work and special training until their results are as good as those on shore—often a good deal better.

But though this last period of my Service life was of more profound professional interest to me than any other in my career, it is of no interest to anyone else; just as I had begun to feel that my experience gave me some confidence in diagnosis, some confidence in the operating theatre, and some ability in the administration of a hospital; just as, in fact, I felt that I had at last become of value—of use—to the Navy, the time of retirement—the dreaded age of fifty-five—arrived: On the eve of my birthday I took off my uniform for the last time, packed it away in my old battered, travel-worn tin cases and shall probably never see it again.

. . . . .

Final Reflections

I am often asked if the Naval Medical Service is sufficiently attractive for me to advise young doctors to enter it?

I certainly consider that it is.

But it depends upon the type of man who thinks of joining. If he is keen on his work and means to be keen on his work—always; if he is keen on games; if he wants a care-free existence among open-hearted, cheery, care-free messmates; does not want to settle down and marry until he is nearer forty than thirty; does not seek affluence and the sea calls him—if ever so little—he will live an ideal life and never regret it. Never regret it until perhaps he reaches the dangerous age between forty and forty-five; but by that time, if he has taken up specialist work and has then the opportunity of spending most of the last ten years of his career in Hospitals or carrying out administrative work, I can think of no career for which I would exchange it.

The officers and men of the Royal Navy deserve the best doctors the medical profession can give them; they appreciate to the fullest extent, the work of doctors who do carry out their duties whole-heartedly.

To live and work among a crew of officers and men; to know them individually; to share the vicissitudes of a commission with them; to help maintain the honour of the ship in sports; to feel that even in gunnery, torpedo and engine-room successes one has a part; to learn all the intricate details of the ship herself; these are all a source of continual interest and pleasure

No "short service" scheme can, in any way, fulfil the needs of the Navy. A doctor is not a ready-made ship's doctor when he first steps on board a man of war. He can only learn what his job is and how best to do it after years of experience afloat; and until he does so learn he is not an efficient ship's doctor.

Specialists in various branches of medicine and surgery the Navy must have and the doctor who has first made himself an efficient ship's doctor can well be trusted to fill a junior hospital billet. He can be trusted to extend his knowledge, subsequently, (he is aided in many ways to do so) until he does become a capable specialist in his own particular province. The latter part of his career will then be spent chiefly in hospitals where the work is sufficient for the most zealous.

These billets are the prizes of the Naval Medical Service and one may safely write that they almost invariably fall to those who have, first of all, made themselves—what the Navy requires primarily—efficient ship's doctors.

Certainly if I had my life to live once again I should retread my steps.

THE END

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